



# Career Management

## About this Topic: Career Management



### Topic Mentors

#### James Waldroop, Ph.D. and Timothy Butler, Ph.D.

James Waldroop and Timothy Butler are the directors of the M.B.A. Career Development Programs at the Harvard Business School. They have spent many years helping business people work through the career planning and development processes. Waldroop and Butler are also the authors of three highly-acclaimed Harvard Business Review articles and two books: *Discovering Your Career in Business* (Perseus, 1997) and *The Twelve Bad Habits that Hold Good People Back* (Currency, 2001). They are frequent contributors to the national media, with articles in *Fortune* and *Fast Company*, and have appeared on radio and TV to discuss issues related to career management, retaining talent, and maximizing personal effectiveness.

### Topic Source Notes

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## What Would You Do?

### What would you do?

David had an epiphany. He no longer wanted to work in advertising. He liked the people, but he didn't find his career stimulating anymore. Then reality set in. He thought to himself: "I'm too old to start from scratch. Too old to learn new skills. And too old to go back to school."

Yet he realized that he had years of valuable knowledge and experience. Everyone said he was a great manager, and he had a knack for understanding client needs.

Then it hit him. "I'm not too old to start something new—I'm too young to give up on my dreams!" But where should he start? What should he do to move himself in the right direction?

What would you do?

As David begins the process of thinking about a new career, he might ask himself the following questions:

- What are his core business interests—that is, what types of work is he most passionate about? For example, does he prefer problem solving, working with people, or making decisions?
- What are his deepest work values? For example, does he care more about having autonomy or earning a big salary?
- And, what are his strongest skills?

Once he has identified the answers to these questions, he will be on his way to defining and navigating his career path.

In this topic, you'll find ways to determine what direction you want to take, learn how to assess your current skills and abilities, and find tools that will help you get on the path to more rewarding and meaningful work.

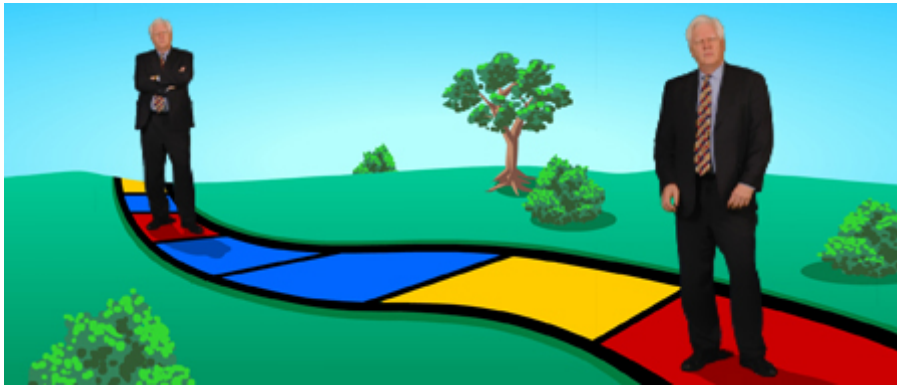
David wants to leave advertising. What can he do to move his career in the right direction?

## Topic Objectives

This topic contains information on how to:

- Identify your core business interests, work reward values, and skills
- Identify the career opportunities within your current role or organization that will let you express those interests, achieve those rewards, and use or develop those skills
- Benefit from career-development resources and processes like career counselors, mentors, networking, informational interviewing, and professional development reviews
- Help others manage their careers

## Change is healthy!



The world is changing fast, including the world of work. The increasing pace of change that has marked recent decades can leave you breathless sometimes, whether you're:

- A manager in a large corporation
- An entrepreneur running your own business
- An individual contributor in a small company
- An independent contractor providing services to clients

When it comes to your *career*, change is natural—and healthy! You strengthen your professional abilities every time you:

- Take on new challenges
- Gain insight into what you want from your work
- Learn a new set of skills

You then find more satisfaction in your work *and* contribute more to your organization.

The process of assessing where you are in your work life, deciding where you want to be, and then making the changes necessary to get there, is called **career development**. It's an ongoing process that *you* orchestrate.

Managing your career requires you to view your professional development as a *path* or a *direction*, rather than a *point* or a *job*. Your career is not a one-time decision made after graduation, but rather an iterative process that you refine or redefine as you grow professionally.

## Growing at your company

As you think about redefining your career path (or discovering a new one) take care that you don't fall victim to the all-too-common "migration temptation"—the belief that if you're unhappy in your job, you should go to another company. The fact is, it may not be your *company* that's the problem. More likely, it's something about your current role.

You stand an excellent chance of finding renewed satisfaction in your work if you take advantage of opportunities at your company to stretch yourself and develop new skills, either by enhancing your current role or taking on one or more entirely new roles within the firm. Your company benefits, too, because it now has an even more loyal employee (you!), without incurring the costs of evaluating, hiring, and training someone to replace you. Organizations large and small now realize that, in order to remain competitive in a fast-changing world, they need employees who:

- Are dedicated to the idea of continuous learning

- Regularly assess their interests, values, and skills so as to figure out the kinds of work for which they are best suited
- Are committed to their company's success
- Understand the skills and behaviors the company will need in the future—and are willing and able to respond quickly and flexibly to develop those capabilities
- Can move easily across functional boundaries and are able to switch between regular duties and special projects

## Leadership Insight: Seek challenges

I enjoy talking to colleagues, talking to direct reports, talking to a younger person entering the industry, about career development and career management. I'm passionate about that.

Because career management is about really developing your potential. And when I have this type of conversation or one-on-ones, I always get the same question: "Esther, since you are a vice president, I want to know — how do I become a director? How do I become a vice president?"

And I always answer the same way. I will say, "That's the wrong question to ask." When you focus on a title or when you focus on a position, you are actually focusing on the wrong thing, because what you need to focus on is — what is the task at hand that you have now?

You need to focus on doing a good job. And you need to focus on "How can I challenge myself?" Sometimes, challenging yourself could mean that you may not get a promotion, that you may volunteer to go and do another job that doesn't require or doesn't involve a promotion but it challenges you.

That challenge is going to push you to develop the skills that you may not have, to develop knowledge that you may not have. And believe it, in time you will have promotions. In time, you will be at the right place at the right time, and all those skills that you have developed through challenging yourself will pay off. And that's how I have managed my career, focusing on challenging, focusing on stretching myself. Promotions — they came along the line.

Focusing on a job title or position will not help you to obtain that career goal. Instead, seek out opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.

### **Esther Alegria**

#### **Vice President of Manufacturing & General Manager, Biogen Idec.**

Esther Alegria is the Vice President of Manufacturing and the General Manager for Biogen Idec, a Pharmaceutical and Biotech industry leader.

She began her career in the pharmaceutical industry as a Quality Control Technician at American Cyanamid and Warner Lambert.

For 11 years, Esther also worked for Wyeth Biotech in multiple capacities, including the development of quality control testing and as the Associate Director of Quality Assurance.

Prior to her current position with Biogen, she served the company as Associate Director of Product Quality Management and Director of

Quality Assurance/Quality Control. Esther completed her doctorate in chemistry at the University of Hawaii.

## Key Idea: Navigating the job-change process

### Key Idea

Even though change is natural and healthy, that doesn't mean it's always easy. Managing your own professional development entails some focused effort on your part, as the following steps suggest.

1. The first step and the most critical task is to **know yourself**. Knowing yourself means that you are able to articulate how the following three categories apply to you.
  - Your most passionate **business interests** are the kinds of work you're most passionate about.
  - Your deepest **work values** are the rewards—such as autonomy, money, close working relationships with colleagues—that you consider most important.
  - Your strongest **skills** are your abilities, the things you have learned how to do, such as use a computer.
2. The second step is to **become familiar** with the many different development opportunities and resources your company has to offer.
3. The last step is to **pursue those opportunities** that you've identified are best for you.

This process can be both exciting and daunting. Prepare to feel stuck at times, and to feel that things are moving way too fast at other times.

The good news is that there are many resources available to help you through the career-growth process—including support and insight from your colleagues, friends, and family. You can also take advantage of a selection of formal assessment tools to help you clarify your interests, values, and skills.

However, if you know what to expect ahead of time, you'll be better able to navigate the change process.

The job-change process can be daunting. Start by knowing yourself and identifying the opportunities that would be best for you.

## Defining your career



The idea that employees should be in charge of their own professional development is relatively new. In the past, people expected to choose a career early in life, find an employer, and then stay at that company for the rest of their working lives.

In return for their loyalty and longevity at the company, they received all sorts of protections—including job security, a steady rise up the "corporate ladder" (with corresponding increases in income), and a retirement pension.

In today's business environment, that "contract" between employer and employee no longer exists in many companies. Why? A confluence of radical changes has rewritten the rules of the workplace. These changes include the following:

- Globalization of the economy
- A shift from the Industrial Age to the Information Age
- New advances in technology (such as the Internet)
- A boom in entrepreneurship and a proliferation of new, small, fast-moving companies
- A wave of reengineering and restructuring that has led to flatter and leaner organizations

These changes mean that the skills required for any company to stay competitive—whether large or small, new or mature—keep shifting at an ever-increasing rate of speed.

## Shifting skills to stay competitive

“ Think of yourself not as the architect of your career, but as the sculptor. ”  
—B.C. Forbes

Today, workers must update and broaden their abilities more frequently and use a wider variety of skills—whether they're employees of a company or running their own business, or whether it's the beginning or end of their career.

Middle managers especially have felt the impact of organizational flattening, in several respects:

- Managers' responsibilities and roles have shifted so dramatically that many people are no longer sure how to define the term manager!
- Owing to layoffs and restructurings in recent decades, many managers have lost their jobs or have had their responsibilities redefined in not-so-desirable ways.

These scenarios can pose difficulties for even the toughest among us. However, there's also a bright side to the picture: As companies reinvent themselves, new opportunities for growth emerge that no one would have dreamed of a few years ago.



You can play a proactive part in these changing times. How? By taking charge of your own career development—constantly clarifying what you want to learn next and then taking the steps necessary to obtain that knowledge.

Also, professional development doesn't necessarily mean changing your career or job, or discovering your ideal career for the first time, as a person new to the work force would do. It can also mean growing and increasing your satisfaction *within* your current role and professional path.

This is far healthier—and more stimulating—than getting caught in a job rut, where you do the same thing, year after year. And it makes you a far more valuable employee to your company.

## Think career lattice, not career ladder

The fact is, in today's work world, career development is for *everyone*—no matter what your industry, position, or age. To grasp the differences between today's and yesterday's employment "rules," compare career-ladder thinking with career-lattice thinking.

The table below illustrates the difference between career-ladder and career-lattice thinking.

### Examples of Career-Ladder and Career-Lattice Thinking

Career-Ladder Thinking	Career-Lattice Thinking
I move up or down the corporate ladder.	I can move up or down <i>or</i> side to side.
My boss has all the answers.	My colleagues and I must figure things out.
The longer I stay at the company, the more rewards I'll receive.	The more I improve my learning, contributions, and performance, the more rewards I'll receive.
My company is responsible for its own success.	I and each of my colleagues are responsible for our organization's success.



## Activity: Career lattice–or ladder?

Remaining competitive in today's business environment requires that you practice career-lattice thinking. But can you distinguish between career-ladder and career-lattice thinking?

I'll just do my job, even if it's boring.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Correct choice.** The passive attitude of this statement is characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees need to be proactive in finding enjoyment in their work.

☐ Lattice

**Not the best choice.** The passive attitude of this statement is characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees need to be proactive in finding enjoyment in their work.

My promotions and titles are what matter most.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Correct choice.** This statement shows a very narrow focus on "getting ahead," ignoring the other satisfactions and rewards of work that are part of career-lattice thinking.

☐ Lattice

**Not the best choice.** This statement shows a very narrow focus on "getting ahead," ignoring the other satisfactions and rewards of work that are part of career-lattice thinking.

My self-worth stems from what others think of me.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Correct choice.** This passive statement is characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees should be proactive in defining their own sense of self-worth rather than leaving it to others.

☐ Lattice

**Not the best choice.** This passive statement is characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees should be proactive in defining their own sense of self-worth rather than leaving it to others.

What and how I contribute to my organization is what matters most.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Not the best choice.** This statement is characteristic of career-lattice thinking. It shows an appreciation of the company as a whole and an awareness of the need to make proactive contributions.

☐ Lattice

**Correct choice.** This statement is characteristic of career-lattice thinking. It shows an appreciation of the company as a whole and an awareness of the need to make proactive contributions.

My self-worth stems from my independence, flexibility, and ability to work effectively and creatively with colleagues to help our organization achieve its objectives.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Not the best choice.** This statement shows a proactive attitude toward the construction of self-worth. This is characteristic of career-lattice thinking.

☐ Lattice

**Correct choice.** This statement shows a proactive attitude toward the construction of self-worth. This is characteristic of career-lattice thinking.

I need to collaborate with others as well as take responsibility for my own employability.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Not the best choice.** Recognizing the need for both collaboration and individual responsibility is a balanced perspective characteristic of career-lattice thinking.

☐ Lattice

**Correct choice.** Recognizing the need for both collaboration and individual responsibility is a balanced perspective characteristic of career-lattice thinking.

I'm dependent on the company for my security and job satisfaction.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Correct choice.** This is a passive attitude characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees must work proactively to keep themselves secure and achieve satisfaction.

☐ Lattice

**Not the best choice.** This is a passive attitude characteristic of career-ladder thinking. In reality, employees must work proactively to keep themselves secure and achieve satisfaction.

I'm responsible for finding meaning in my work.

Does this statement represent career-ladder or career-lattice thinking?

☐ Ladder

**Not the best choice.** Taking responsibility for finding meaning and enjoyment in one's work is part of career-lattice thinking.

☐ Lattice

**Correct choice.** Taking responsibility for finding meaning and enjoyment in one's work is part of career-lattice thinking.

## Think strategically about your career

Your company is constantly thinking strategically about its positioning in the industry and the value of its products and services. Likewise, *you* can constantly think strategically about your place in the company and the value of your work interests and skills.

By regularly attending to your development and updating your skills, you become increasingly valuable to your company. You can also derive more and more satisfaction and stimulation from your work.

What if you work for a small company or have launched your own business? You can still think strategically about your career. And you'll probably feel even more responsible for your professional growth. Why? Because, unlike many employees in large corporations, you won't have access to an in-house career center or company-sponsored professional-development programs—leaving your career development entirely up to you.

## Who are you?



The most important step in managing your career is getting to know yourself. This is true whether you're just beginning your career, established in one but wishing you could change in some way, or happy where you are but still wanting to improve certain aspects of it.

Knowing yourself includes articulating:

- What types of work you like to do
- Which activities give you the most meaning
- What kinds of environments you prefer to work in
- What sorts of people you like to work with
- What abilities you possess and those you need to develop

In other words, to define and navigate your career path, you need to identify three main qualities about yourself:

1. Your most passionate **core business interests**
2. Your deepest **work values**
3. Your strongest **skills**

## Identifying main qualities about yourself

“ People cannot find their missions until they know themselves. ”  
-Laurie Beth Jones

How do you go about identifying your core business interests, work values, and skills? You have three sources of information to which you can turn to begin this clarification process:

- You
- Your colleagues, friends, and family
- Formal assessment tools

## Look inward

To use yourself as an information source, look deep within yourself to identify key themes. You can do this by using checklists or worksheets that help you clarify your core interests, values, and skills.

You can also engage in some short mental exercises to get to know yourself better. Here are just a few:

- Ask yourself what you cherish most about yourself. What is most special about you? What are your unique gifts?
- Leaf through some magazines and find a picture that you think best represents who you are. Ask yourself why you chose that particular image.
- Imagine that you are at the end of your life, looking back over your entire work history. Finish these sentences: "I am most proud of \_\_\_\_\_. " "I wish I had done more of \_\_\_\_\_."

Notice what the results of the above activities suggest about your interests, values, and skills.

## Ask your colleagues, friends, and family

“ It takes two to speak the truth – one to speak and one to listen. ”  
–Henry David Thoreau

The people who know you best often become excellent sources of information about your work interests, values, and abilities. Indeed, if you imagine yourself as the CEO of your own professional growth, you can think of these people as your "board of directors."

Try these activities to build self-knowledge with the help of your personal board:

- **Consult your colleagues.** If you work in a large or small organization, ask colleagues, "*What's my reputation in the company? What am I best known for?*"
- **Interview your friends.** Pick five or six people who know you well. Ask them the following:
  - "What four words would you use to describe me?"
  - "If your best friend asked you to tell her more about me, what would you say?"
  - "What do you see as my driving force? What makes me tick?"
- **Ask your board to write letters.** Invite several people to write a letter to you, about you. (Tip: choose a mix of people; for example, a colleague, supervisor, family member, college or business-school friend, a social friend, your partner, and even an adult son or daughter.)

Provide board members with a form that lists the following questions and that includes spaces where they can write or type their answers. Ask them to use the third person ("Pat enjoys..."):

- "What would be the ideal work for me?"
- "What seems to make me most fulfilled and excited?"
- "What work should I stay away from, and why?"
- "What about myself do I have trouble seeing?"
- "What aspects of myself do I need to change to be more successful?"
- "What aspects of myself should I not change?"

Collect all the responses and look for common themes. These themes will provide clues to your interests, values, and skills.

Also, be sure to thank your board members for their honesty and thoughtful attention. They'll appreciate knowing that you're using the information and insight they've provided.

## Use formal assessment tools



There's a broad array of formal assessment tools that can help you clarify your deepest interests, values, and skills. For some of these, you might want to see a career counselor, who will administer the tests and interpret them for you. For others, you can take the tests and interpret the results yourself.

If your company's human resources department has a career counselor who uses assessment tools, pay a visit and see if you can schedule a time to take any tests you're interested in. If one isn't available, consider hiring a career counselor to help you with the tests.

## Know when it's time for a change

There's another important part of knowing yourself: recognizing when it's time to explore new work opportunities. The signals can differ for each person. However, here's a list of possible indications that you've outgrown your current role and are ready for a change:

- A feeling of dread when Monday morning rolls around
- Envy of what others are doing for work
- Restlessness or boredom
- A recurring sense of repetition in your work
- A growing interest in nonwork areas of your life, such as a course you're taking or a home-improvement project you're considering
- Inability to see a future that you want to move toward
- A tendency to overreact to small problems
- A need for more intellectual challenge, financial compensation, autonomy, or another major work reward value

## Leadership Insight: Career impasse

Career impasse is a time when things aren't working at work. We're unhappy, and we don't necessarily know why. Is it what we're doing every day? Is it where we're doing it? Is it the people we're doing it with? Is it all three, or some combination?

For 25 years and more, people have come to me at times of career impasse. And what I'd like to do is briefly share something about attitude, an attitude to take toward career impasse that might be helpful. Briefly, the attitude I suggest is: honor it. Career impasse is a wake-up call. It's a message that there are parts of the self, parts of your self, that are not being lived in your daily life that need to be lived.

Now, the difficulty comes with the fact that, when we are unhappy and we know something is wrong, our instinct is to move away from it, to deny it, to put off looking at it, to lean away. My suggestion is to lean toward it, to honor it as a wake-up call, to look more deeply into this unhappiness, to allow that unhappiness to speak to you. What is the message behind the unhappiness? What isn't being lived in your life?

This can be difficult. We may feel that we have made a big commitment to this role, to this workplace, to these people. We may feel shame: "I got it wrong. How could I get it wrong? I thought this was going to be it."

There are many different types of thoughts and thought patterns that could intervene, that could prevent us from really opening up and looking at what the impasses bring us. But if we can recognize this resistance as it occurs, and remember that our job is to lean toward it and honor it, then we will be able to use this opportunity to open up and allow something to speak about what we need to be doing next at this particular time in our lives.

When things aren't going well at work, take the time to understand your feelings, rather than pushing them aside.

### **Tim Butler**

**Senior Fellow and Director of Career Development Programs, Harvard Business School**

Timothy Butler is a Senior Fellow and Director of Career Development Programs at Harvard Business School. His research interests focus on career decision making and the relationship between personality structure and work satisfaction.

His work has been published in periodicals such as Fortune, Fast Company, and the Harvard Business Review.

Tim's research has led to the development of three psychometric instruments, the Business Career Interest Inventory, the Management and Professional Rewards Profile, and the Management and Professional Abilities Profile.

Tim has taught executive education programs and lectured at business schools throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. He has acted as a consultant to senior managers from organizations ranging from small technology start-ups to Fortune 500 corporations.

His published titles include "Discovering Your Career in Business," "The Twelve Bad Habits That Hold Good People Back," and "Getting Unstuck: How Dead Ends Become New Paths." Learn more about his work at: [www.careerleader.com](http://www.careerleader.com).

## **Eight core business interests**

The following three categories illustrate one way to describe core business interests. This method represents interests as eight business functions sorted into three groups.



### Category 1: Application of Expertise

- **Application of Technology** (an interest in the inner workings of things; curiosity about better ways of using technology to solve business problems; and comfort with mathematics, computer programming, and physical models of reality)
- **Quantitative Analysis** (interest in problem solving that relies on mathematical analysis)
- **Theory Development and Conceptual Thinking** (broadly conceptual approaches to problem solving; interest in and comfort with ideas, imagination, theory, plans, scenarios, and forecasts)
- **Creative Production** (interest in highly creative activities)

### Category 2: Working with People

- **Counseling and Mentoring** (interest in helping others and developing relationships as an integral part of business work)
- **Managing People and Relationships** (interest in dealing with people and interpersonal issues daily)

### Category 3: Control and Influence

- **Enterprise Control** (interest in having ultimate decision-making authority for an enterprise, division, or project)
- **Influence through Language and Ideas** (interest in influencing others through the skilled use of written and spoken language)

## Core interests in combination

“Choose a job you love, and you will never work a day in your life.”  
–Confucius

Most people have between one and three core business interests, some of which may be stronger than others. For example, you may be fascinated by quantitative puzzles and feel great satisfaction in helping other people learn to problem solve as well. These core interests remain relatively stable over your lifetime.

Interestingly, not only can your core interests overlap; they might also manifest themselves differently at different times. For example, if your core interest is Creative Production, perhaps:

- As a child, you loved writing stories and plays
- As a teen, you enjoyed devising mechanical gadgets
- As an adult, you desired a career in design engineering or movie production

## Figuring out your core interests



You can identify your core business interests simply by (1) learning what typical activities express the various interests, and then (2) seeing which of the activities you find most appealing. The following tables give examples of such activities.

### Core Interests: Categories

Category 1: Application of Expertise	
<b>Application of Technology</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Computer programming</li> <li>• Production and systems planning</li> <li>• Product and process design</li> <li>• Process analysis</li> <li>• Production planning</li> <li>• Systems analysis</li> <li>• Mechanical crafting/manufacturing</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>	<b>Quantitative Analysis</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market-research analysis</li> <li>• Forecasting</li> <li>• Computer-model building</li> <li>• Production scheduling</li> <li>• Cash-flow and investment analysis</li> <li>• Accounting</li> </ul>
<b>Theory Development and Conceptual Thinking</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic-theory developing</li> <li>• Business-model developing</li> <li>• Competition analysis</li> </ul>	<b>Creative Production</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New-product design</li> <li>• Marketing and advertising</li> <li>• New-idea generation</li> <li>• Developing innovative</li> </ul>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing "big-picture" strategy</li> <li>• Process design</li> <li>• Teaching business theory</li> </ul> | <p>approaches and solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event planning</li> <li>• Conducting public relations</li> <li>• Entertaining</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Illustrating</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Category 2: Working with People

### Counseling and Mentoring

*Examples:*

- Coaching
- Training
- Teaching
- Helping
- Drawing people out
- Supporting
- Providing feedback and advice

### Managing People and Relationships

*Examples:*

- Managing others to accomplish the goals of the business
- Directing
- Supervising
- Leading and inspiring others
- Selling
- Negotiating
- Motivating

## Category 3: Control and Influence

### Enterprise Control

*Examples:*

- Controlling resources to actualize a business vision
- Setting strategic direction for a company, business unit, work team, or division
- Having ultimate decision-making authority
- Making deals
- Holding ultimate responsibility for business

### Influence Through Language and Ideas

*Examples:*

- Negotiating
- Deal-making
- Conducting public relations
- Selling
- Persuading
- Designing advertising

transactions, such as trades, sales, etc.

- campaigns
- Communicating ideas through writing or speaking

## Other ways to determine core interests

To determine your core interests, you could also try this exercise:

1. Think about whether you're envious of one or more particular colleagues. That is, do they have jobs that you wish *you* had?
2. What activities do these people do that you wish you could do?
3. In previous jobs that you've held, what kinds of activities did you keep gravitating toward?

When you're working on projects, which *stage* of the project excites you the most—the planning stage? Implementation? Follow-up? What do the answers to the above questions suggest about your core business interests?

Finally, you can experiment with:

- Assessment tools
- Self-reflection exercises
- Activities that help you gain insights about yourself from others

## Activity: Interests assessment

When making a career change, your interests, more than even your skills or experience, should determine your direction. Use this assessment to see where your interests lie.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Controlling resources to actualize a business vision
2. Holding ultimate responsibility for business transactions, such as trades, sales, etc.
3. Having ultimate decision-making authority
4. Setting strategic direction for a company, business unit, work team, or division

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Being in control of projects and resources is not very appealing to you. You may want to choose a career where you avoid extensive managerial duties.

☐ 1-2

Being in control of projects and resources is somewhat interesting to you. You may prefer to manage smaller projects over large ones.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You may want to seek a career in project or resource management.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Deal-making

2. Negotiating

3. Selling

4. Persuading

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Achieving influence through communication is not very appealing to you. You may want to avoid careers where you have to be the cheerleader for a project or sell ideas to clients or customers.

☐ 1-2

Achieving influence through communication is somewhat interesting to you. You might like a career that involves occasional presentations and client interactions.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You want to achieve influence and control via excellence in your spoken or written language. You like to communicate your ideas to others. You may enjoy a career conducting public relations or designing advertising campaigns.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Coaching

2. Training

3. Drawing people out

#### 4. Providing feedback and advice

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

You don't really enjoy working with direct reports to overcome problems and develop skills. You may want a career where these responsibilities are delegated to someone else.

☐ 1-2

Working with direct reports to overcome problems and develop skills is somewhat interesting to you. You may want it to be a limited part of your career, delegating some mentoring responsibilities and taking on others yourself.

☐ 3-4

Working with direct reports to overcome problems and develop skills is a top interest for you. You might find a lot of satisfaction in a job where you work with young direct reports who need a lot of guidance.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Managing others to accomplish the goals of the business

2. Directing

3. Supervising

4. Leading and inspiring others

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Managing people and relationships is not very appealing to you. You might want to find a company where employees can do their work independently.

☐ 1-2

Managing people and relationships is somewhat interesting to you. You may prefer to work with small teams so this is a significant but not overwhelming part of your responsibilities.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. A career where team leadership is one of your primary responsibilities would be a good fit for you.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Developing innovative approaches and solutions
2. Event planning
3. Entertaining
4. Writing and/or illustrating

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Brainstorming and visioning are not particularly appealing to you. You may prefer a position where your responsibility is to help implement other people's ideas.

☐ 1-2

Brainstorming and visioning are somewhat interesting to you. You might like a career that involves a good mix of creating ideas and implementing them.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You might enjoy a career in new product design, marketing and advertising, or new idea generation.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Economic-theory developing
2. Competition analysis
3. Designing "big-picture" strategy
4. Teaching business theory

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Creating the structures or making the projections that your company operates on is not that appealing to you. You may want to avoid jobs where you would have responsibility for these things and focus on individual projects and concrete work.

☐ 1-2

You are somewhat interested in creating the structures and making the projections that your company operates on. You may wish to find a career where these responsibilities are



mixed with managing individual projects and doing concrete work.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You may enjoy a career in business model development or process design.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Engineering
2. Computer programming
3. Production and systems planning
4. Mechanical crafting/manufacturing

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Making use of new technologies is not that appealing to you. You may want to stick to jobs that only involve the use of technology you know and are comfortable with.

☐ 1-2

You are somewhat interested in using new technologies. A good career for you might involve a mix of working with both new and familiar technology.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You probably have a knack for technology, math, or science. You may enjoy a career in research, process or systems analysis, or product design.

Answer each of the following four questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I am interested in...

1. Market-research analysis
2. Forecasting
3. Computer-model building
4. Accounting

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Working with numbers is not very appealing to you. You may want to avoid careers that involve making sophisticated mathematical projections or analyses.

☐ 1-2

Working with numbers is somewhat appealing to you. You may want a career where you can mix mathematical analysis and projection with other kinds of work.

☐ 3-4

This is one of your top interests. You are probably comfortable working with numbers and like using math to solve problems. You may enjoy a career in cash-flow and investment analysis, production scheduling, or finance.

## Key Idea: What are work values?

### Key Idea

People mean many different things when they speak of values.

For example, many of us speak of family values, national values, or spiritual values.

*Work* values constitute a special set of values. Specifically, they're the values you place on the various rewards that you might get in return for performing your job.

They are the values that motivate you and give you energy and excitement about your work.

Here are some examples of work values:

- **Financial rewards** convey financial security and stability. They might include a predictable salary, benefits, future employment, and the opportunity to acquire wealth.
- **Task rewards** include intellectual challenge and mental stimulation.
- **People rewards** are associated with affiliation—the opportunity to work with colleagues you like and admire.
- **Career rewards** provide you access to people and opportunities that will position you well for your next career move.
- **Lifestyle rewards** such as work/life balance allow you time to pursue other important aspects of your life, such as family or leisure activities.

How can you measure the importance you place on different kinds of professional rewards? Defining your **work values** is a good start.

## Why clarify your values?

“ For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. ”  
–Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Clarifying your values offers several benefits:

- **It increases the likelihood that you'll choose satisfying work.** It may be difficult to find one position that satisfies all of your work values. But if what you're doing for work doesn't provide *enough* of the rewards that you consider most important, you probably won't remain happy in it for very long.
- **It lets you "shop" more efficiently for the right developmental opportunities.** Just as you can evaluate a potential computer purchase much more quickly if you keep a few must-have features in mind, you can judge a work opportunity more wisely if you remember your most crucial rewards.
- **It helps you match your reward values to an organization's or department's culture.** Work rewards manifest themselves in an organization's or department's culture—the way people do things, what they expect, what they think is most important, and so forth. A large company's different departments (for example, engineering, sales, or human resources) might have *markedly* different cultures. By knowing your values, you can pick the culture that will provide those rewards.

## How to clarify your values

There are many different ways to clarify your values. Here are just a few:

1. **Use tools:** You can use various checklists or worksheets to identify your top work values.
2. **Ask reflective questions:** You can try these questions for reflection:
  - Think of times when you've passionately debated something with another person: What issues did the debates center on? Which side did you take? Why?
  - Is there anything for which you'd be willing to give up everything you own? If so, what is it?
  - If you could share the one most important thing you've learned in your life with someone else, what would it be? The answers to these questions give you clues to your deepest values.
3. **Consult close friends and colleagues:** Finally, you can consult people who know you well. Ask them what values *they* think are most important to you. For example, what do they see you getting most excited about in your work?

**Note:** In clarifying values, many people face a common temptation to list values that they think they should have—like altruism—and to avoid listing values they think they shouldn't have—like desire for prestige or financial gain. Be as honest as you possibly can when doing this exercise; genuine answers will make it much easier for you to evaluate and choose the best possible work opportunities for you.

## Activity: Rewards assessment

Knowing what motivates you is crucial to your career development. Use this assessment to see where your priorities lie.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Influence the policies and work environment of my company
2. Exercise authority over others

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

You do not crave the opportunity to exercise power and influence over others. You may feel comfortable with others establishing your goals and metrics, or prefer autonomy.

☐ 1

You may enjoy the opportunity to influence others in certain situations. Perhaps you feel comfortable with others establishing your company's goals and metrics, but you enjoy managing smaller projects or teams.

☐ 2

You may enjoy holding a high-influence position, such as vice president. Or you may prefer to work at a smaller company, where each employee holds a larger sway over policy.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Earn a very high salary
2. Earn performance-based bonuses

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Although you need enough financial reward to remain solvent, other rewards take precedence.

☐ 1

Compensation is important, but it is only one of the rewards that you value.

☐ 2

Compensation is among the top rewards you should consider when evaluating your current or future position(s).

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Continually build and improve my skill set
2. Achieve excellence in my field

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

- ☐ 0  
You do not place a high value on growing your skill set; you may feel satisfied with your current skills.
- ☐ 1  
You care about quality in your work and seek to grow your skill set further.
- ☐ 2  
Attaining excellence in your role and in your field at large is very important to you. Make sure that you strive for work that challenges you to develop your expertise.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Receive recognition and appreciation for my contributions
2. Receive support for my development

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

- ☐ 0  
You may be largely self-motivated, so this is not a high-priority category for you.
- ☐ 1  
You appreciate recognition and support—you like to feel like a valued contributor.
- ☐ 2  
You desire recognition and support. Praise and rewards motivate you to do your best work, so you may favor a workplace that has a structure that will provide you support.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Feel like I belong to a group
2. Work closely with colleagues I admire and value

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

- ☐ 0  
You may prefer to work by yourself, or with a small group of subordinates. You do not crave a sense of belonging to a group.
- ☐ 1  
The quality of your colleagues is important to you—you are happiest when you are able to work with people you enjoy and admire.
- ☐ 2  
You require a certain degree of affiliation with your colleagues to reach true job satisfaction. When evaluating current or future positions, be sure to strongly consider who you will be working with.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Take on intellectual challenges
2. Work on interesting problems/projects

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

- ☐ 0  
You are motivated by other rewards—perhaps rewards such as working with people or financial gains are more important to you.
- ☐ 1  
You enjoy intellectual stimulation and challenge in your work, but it is not your top priority.
- ☐ 2  
Intellectual stimulation and challenge is essential to your on-the-job happiness. Seek work in which you will continually be challenged to tackle new problems or embrace learning opportunities.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Get to and from work quickly
2. Work in an upscale or creative workspace

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

You do not place a lot of value on your work environment or its location, as long as certain other rewards are in place.

☐ 1

The aesthetics and location of your workplace are important to you. You feel that a well-maintained office space provides a comfortable and pleasing environment, and a reasonable commute is highly valuable.

☐ 2

The atmosphere and/or location of your workspace are critically important to you. Perhaps certain types of spaces stimulate your creativity while others leave you unmotivated.

Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Work with very little supervision
2. Not depend on the work of others

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

You may prefer working in groups, and like the direction that supervision provides.

☐ 1

You do not mind taking direction from supervisors, but you appreciate that you have control over how you implement their suggestions.

☐ 2

You are happiest without close supervision; you know what you need to do, and appreciate the space to work out *how* to get your work done on your own.



Answer each of the following two questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

I want to ...

1. Have enough time and energy left over at night for my family
2. Keep my weekend free for non-work activities

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0

Your work is of primary importance. You may be willing to sacrifice other aspects of your life, at least for now, to achieve your career goals.

☐ 1

Work/life balance is important to you. You'll put in the occasional weekend when necessary, but look for jobs where this is kept to a minimum.

☐ 2

Your commitments outside of work—whether to family, or to non-work activities—are extremely important to you. You would give up other rewards in order to safeguard your non-work time.

## Types of skills

As you progress through your work life, you acquire many different skills from a broad range of experiences and training. Skills fall into a number of categories, and there are different ways to describe them.

Here are some examples:

### Skill Categories

Skill Category	Examples
Using Your Hands	Assembling things, operating machinery, repairing things

Using Your Body	Doing outdoor activities like camping, being physically active, having muscular coordination as in gymnastics
Using Words	Reading, writing, speaking, teaching
Using Your Five Senses	Observing, inspecting, diagnosing
Using Numbers	Counting, computing, record-keeping
Using Intuition	Acting on "gut" reactions, anticipating future events, sizing up a situation or person
Using Analytical Thinking or Logic	Researching, analyzing, prioritizing
Using Originality or Creativity	Imagining, inventing, designing, engineering
Using Helpfulness	Having sensitivity to others' feelings, conveying warmth, drawing others out, motivating, guiding
Using Artistic Abilities	Fashioning or shaping things, composing, playing an instrument, painting, decorating, cooking

Using Leadership	Initiating new projects, organizing, directing, making decisions, taking risks
Using Follow-Through	Using what others have developed, following through on plans or instructions, attending to details, filing, retrieving information

## What are your strongest skills?



As you begin exploring developmental opportunities at your organization, you'll need to know which skills they require. That way, you can decide to what extent these opportunities will allow you to do the following:

- Use skills you already have in abundance
- Prompt you to stretch skills that you possess to some degree but would like to strengthen
- Require you to obtain entirely new skills
- Some combination of the above

The first step, though, is to take stock of your existing skills, and to assess which ones are your strongest. There are several ways to do this, including these:

- Experimenting with assessment tools, checklists, and short exercises
- Asking your friends, family, and colleagues to give their opinions about what you do best
- Asking a career counselor to help

## Key Idea: Know your transferable skills

### Key Idea

When assessing your skills, it's especially important to identify your transferable skills. These are skills that have value regardless of the business context in which you're using them.

For example:

- Writing
- Motivating others
- Organizing data
- Interpreting information

Why is it important to know your transferable skills?

- Knowing this information allows you to widen the selection of potentially interesting work opportunities to include all those in which you would use your transferable skills.
- You can avoid the common misconception that, in order to try a new work area, you need to develop a whole new set of skills. You may realize you *don't* necessarily need to go back to school to develop new skills for a different opportunity.
- You can market yourself to potential new supervisors in a whole new area of work by pointing out your transferable skills.

Do you worry that you can't apply your current skills to a new job? By identifying your **transferable skills**, you might find that you have the necessary qualifications after all.

## Four points about skills

“ The work will teach you how to do it. ”  
–Estonian proverb

In assessing your skills, keep these points in mind:

1. **Skills are a "threshold" variable in your ability to do a job successfully.** You need *enough* of a certain skill (being able to lift 50-pound bags, for example), but in many cases, having a lot more of that same skill (being able to lift 500-pound bags) won't make you any *more* successful.
2. **It's easy to vary your skills.** Compared to your core business interests and work values, your skill-set can change relatively easily. That is, you can strengthen existing skills or acquire new ones through practice, training, and new experiences.
3. **It's perfectly okay to have both strengths and weaknesses.** Often, when people begin exploring new positions at work, they assume that they have to be good at just about everything. The fact is, we all have both strengths and weaknesses—that's part of what makes us who we are. Don't feel bad if you lack certain skills; everyone does.
4. **Weigh the benefits of developing new skills.** Investing in skill development can be costly, in terms of time, effort, and money (possibly). So, when you're evaluating a potential new opportunity at work, spend some time deciding whether you want to invest in developing the skills that the opportunity requires.

## Put it all together

Once you've assessed your skills, the next step is to get a complete picture of who you are by combining the skills information with what you learned about your core business interests and work values.

You can now use this knowledge and information to redefine your current role in order to develop yourself professionally.

You can also begin evaluating the growth opportunities available at your company and pick the most appropriate ones for you.

Throughout this process of gaining knowledge and information about yourself, your interests, values, and skills, remember: interests and values matter the most. When evaluating a career development opportunity, make sure that it matches your *core business interests* and *work values*. If it does, you may well decide to obtain the skills that will help you perform in that new position.

## Leadership Insight: A great job fit

I think job fit or career fit is a very important principle to understand. And it takes three things to be really fit in your job and do your best. That is a skill fit, a value fit and an interest fit, and they're all critical. Sometimes we think it's all about skills. No, no, no. Sometimes we have the best skills in the world, and we are bored silly using them. It's about skills and values. Am I committed to this organization? Am I committed to what we do?

And then, thirdly, it's about interest. Do I get joy out of this? Am I passionate about it? Does this make me want to get up in the morning and go to work?

So, the more it is a skill fit, a value fit, and an interest fit, the more you're going to be productive, the more you're going to bring innovation, the more the job is going to be really meaningful to you. And meaningful work is what we're all after.

Align your skills, values and interests with your career.

### **Beverly Kaye** **CEO, Career Systems International**

Dr. Beverly Kaye is a best-selling author and is internationally recognized as one of the most invested, knowledgeable, and practical professionals in career development, talent retention, and mentoring. She is the founder and CEO of Career Systems International, whose clients include many of the top Fortune 500 companies.

She is the author of "Up Is Not the Only Way" and coauthor of "Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay" and "Love It, Don't Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work." A dynamic and committed keynote speaker, Beverly's presentations engage participants, stimulate learning, and inspire action.

She has a doctorate from UCLA, and completed graduate work at the Sloan School of Management at MIT.

## Start the growth-opportunity search



You've worked to identify your deepest business interests, clarify your most important work reward values, and assess your strongest skills. Maybe you've even defined a career-opportunity target.

What's the next step on the path? Many companies have an explicit process in place to enable employees to explore and pursue new opportunities. For example, some organizations suggest that you visit their career-management center, review the job bank, and then follow their guidelines.

Other companies ask that you first talk with your supervisor. That way, he or she can become aware of your search and help you either redefine your current role or identify potential opportunities elsewhere in the organization.

Indeed, in most organizations, helping direct reports clarify their goals and find appropriate growth opportunities are important responsibilities for managers. By supporting you in this way, your manager helps the organization retain a valued employee—a key step for any company that wants to stay competitive in today's economy. You can provide the same kind of support for your direct reports.

## Identifying growth opportunities in your organization

“ People ache to do great work. ”  
—Warren Bennis

There are many ways to identify potential growth opportunities throughout your company. The key is to make sure you *know your company*; that is:

- In simplest terms, what work does the organization do?
- What are your company's biggest needs and challenges?
- How do you think you could contribute to your company's efforts in ways that suit your deepest interests, values, and skills?

## Find out what people do



You also need to find out what kinds of work people do throughout the organization. Knowing this will give you a "big picture" of how the company functions.

Gathering all this information takes some research and a willingness to get to know people who can help you. Here are four ideas to get you started:

1. **Use your company's career-management resources.** Many companies offer numerous ways to learn about growth opportunities. Find out what they are—and take advantage of them. These include:
  - Career centers staffed by career counselors and career-research specialists
  - Internal networks of people who are willing to talk with any fellow employee about their jobs
  - Opportunities to sample different jobs by filling in for colleagues who are on sabbatical
  - Job banks describing all the positions available in the organization
  - Reference materials and training to help you create a professional-growth plan and hone your résumé-writing and interviewing skills
  - In-house courses on various subjects and skills related to jobs within the company
  - College or vocational-school tuition-reimbursement programs
2. **Build your network.** Networking simply means getting to know people in your organization who can help you learn about and pursue career opportunities. To become an expert networker, ask yourself: "Who knows the most about what's going on in the organization?" Then seek out opportunities to meet them and talk with them about your search.
3. **Cultivate relationships with mentors.** Mentors are experts from whom you can learn, in detail, about specific kinds of work and strategies for defining a career path. They can be people who work in your organization or outside your organization, members of professional associations—anyone whose experience and knowledge you respect.
4. **Consult a career counselor.** Many organizations have career counselors on staff who can advise you on how to spot potential development opportunities. If your organization provides this service, make an appointment. If not, consider having a couple of sessions with an independent career counselor. These professionals' services can be pricey, so be sure to shop around for the best choice for you.

## Key Idea: Choosing the right growth opportunities

### Key Idea

When making decisions about which growth opportunities to pursue, ask yourself the following questions:



- "How good is the fit between the position and my interests, values, and skills?"
- "How good is the fit between the position and who I want to become?" (That is, "What kinds of *learning opportunities* does this position offer me?")

The best developmental assignments are ones in which the fit is imperfect—the position will "stretch" you by offering challenges that encourage you to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge.

Of course, these positions carry some risk. You won't be able to make your most productive contribution right away. After all, you'll need time to learn the new dimensions of the job.

The challenge is to pick an opportunity that doesn't stretch you *too* much or carry *too* great a risk. As a general rule of thumb, the risk is probably too great if it seems that you'll need more than six months to learn enough to make a meaningful contribution.

Which growth opportunities should you pursue? Look for those that match your interests, values, and skills, but for which the fit is also imperfect.

## Getting the skills you need

There are lots of ways to enhance your skills, including:

- Onsite training
- Adult-education courses
- Distance learning
- Online courses

One key thing to remember, though, is that you *don't* always need to go back to school to make a major change in your career. Before you commit to spending a lot of money (and time) on a new degree, do some research to make sure there isn't a more affordable and less time-consuming way to master the skills that your new position requires.

## Informational interviewing

Once you've identified possible development opportunities, it's time to arrange some informational interviews. You can conduct these interviews with people who are currently doing the kind of work you're interested in, or with supervisors or department or division heads who can give you valuable information about the work.

Informational interviewing is less formal than actual job interviewing because it:

- Gives you a chance to learn more about positions of interest
- Helps you get to know potential new supervisors and other people in departments or divisions of interest
- Lets you showcase your talents
- May give you further insight into additional interesting positions. (Even if an interview reveals that a particular new job wouldn't work out for you, use the encounter as another networking opportunity by asking the interviewee to suggest more people for you to talk with.)

The key to setting up informational interviews is to be sincere and honest when contacting potential interviewees. If you're nervous about contacting people, keep these points in mind:

- You're asking for information, not a job offer.
- Most people are happy to talk about their work, if you respect their time (ask for no more than 20 minutes) and clearly value the information they offer.
- People are especially open to meeting with you if you've been referred to them by someone they know and respect. So, broach the subject of an interview by saying something like, "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm currently working as a \_\_\_\_\_ and am interested in learning about \_\_\_\_\_. My colleague \_\_\_\_\_ mentioned that you'd be a great person for me to talk with. Could I have 20 minutes of your time when it's most convenient for you?"

## Activity: Identify next steps

The best next step in developing a career depends on a lot of factors. Practice determining the next step for pursuing career goals.

Martin has worked as a technical support representative at a large consumer electronics company for a little over a year. He studied electrical engineering at college and hopes one day to have a career developing new products. Martin's supervisors in the technical support department have been very impressed with his job performance, and they say that they've let other managers in the company know what a high achiever he is.

What should be Martin's next step in developing his career?

- ☐ Seek out opportunities in other departments within his company  
**Correct choice.** Martin has made a very positive impression at his current company; however, he is currently working for a department that doesn't offer much advancement and doesn't take advantage of his particular talents. He might see if a transfer to the design or development departments would be possible.
- ☐ Seek opportunities outside the company  
**Not the best choice.** Martin has generated a lot of positive feedback at his current company. Before looking for jobs outside the company, he ought to see if he can capitalize on this positive feedback by finding new job opportunities within his current company.
- ☐ Position himself for advancement within his current department  
**Not the best choice.** Martin's current department, technical support, doesn't appear to offer work that fully satisfies Martin's personal career goals.

Glory is a sales representative for a food and beverage supply company. She is good at her job, though she had always imagined herself working in restaurant or hotel management instead. Her five-year anniversary at her current job is quickly approaching, and her manager has been dropping hints about "where Glory wants to be five years from now."

What should be Glory's next step in developing her career?

- ☐ Speak with her manager about the misfit between her current job and her deepest professional goals

**Not the best choice.** Before Glory begins a discussion with her supervisor, she should take some time to consider what types of positions will satisfy her professional interests. Perhaps a different role in her current company, for example acting as a consultant, or heading up a new product line, would be appropriate.

- ☐ Conduct informational interviews with restaurant and hotel management professionals outside the company

**Correct choice.** Since Glory works as a sales representative for a food and beverage supply company, she has many contacts within the restaurant or hotel business. Through informational interviews with some of these individuals, she will be better able to assess where her true professional interests lie.

- ☐ Talk to her supervisor about becoming a sales manager

**Not the best choice.** Although, with her positive record, Glory could begin moving to a position of prominence within her current department, it is not clear that this would satisfy her own career goals.

Sandip has a college degree in sales and marketing. He has worked for two years for the marketing department of a major pharmaceutical company. He has particularly enjoyed opportunities to work on the design of posters, brochures, and other sales literature that his company produces, since this touches on one of his lifelong hobbies: the visual arts.

What should be Sandip's next step in developing his career?

- ☐ Identify all the departments in the company that might be able to offer him an entry-level management position

**Not the best choice.** Sandip's current job seems to be a good fit with his interests, while it is not clear that being a manager is something that he would actually enjoy. If he were interested in a management role, he should first consider what types of management opportunities might exist within the marketing communications field.

- ☐ Seek opportunities outside the company to work on the design of marketing materials

**Not the best choice.** Sandip's current position seems to suit him well. Before seeking opportunities outside the company, he might first clarify his interests in graphic design and then explore what types of opportunities might be available in his current company.

- ☐ Identify what skills he needs to develop to advance within the marketing department

**Correct choice.** Sandip's career goals seem well-served at his current position, so he should see what advancement opportunities are available to him there. In particular, he might explore what skills would help him assume more responsibility for the design and development of marketing materials.



Every time someone helps someone else—through networking, informational interviewing, and so forth—that person becomes willing to help others in turn. So by helping others, you become part of a constant, informal networking process—a natural web of people who are willing to provide and receive help.

For example, one day, someone in a different department from yours asks you if you know of any good engineers they could talk to. You do, and you give that person a few names. Months later, you might run across the same person and realize that he or she could help you by recommending, say, some marketing specialists you could talk to.

## Put your organization first!

“ The sole meaning of life is  
to serve humanity. ”  
–Leo Tolstoy

Just as your colleagues can help you clarify your professional goals and identify growth opportunities in your company, you can do the same for your direct reports or colleagues. In fact, by supporting them in this way, you're doing what's best for your organization.

When you help your direct reports find stimulation and satisfaction in their work, you put your organization first—in two ways:

1. You encourage talented, ambitious people to stay with the company—so the organization retains valuable employees. You thus support your firm in its efforts to build a stronger work force.
2. You help the organization cut costs. After all, finding, hiring, and training replacements is expensive.

## Speak the language of interests, values, and skills



To support your direct reports' professional goals, you have to become aware of those goals. An excellent way to become—and stay—aware is to have regular "Professional Development Reviews" (PDRs) with each of your direct reports.

Try making PDRs part of performance reviews, or conduct them separately. Whichever way you decide to schedule PDRs, make sure you frame the discussion in terms of *core business interests*, *work reward values*, and *skills*. This focuses the meeting and helps you both talk in specific terms about the person's goals.

## Help others identify opportunities in your organization

You can help direct reports search for opportunities in several ways:

- **Redefine a current role:** Consider redefining a current role so that it better matches the person's interests, values, and skills.
- **Help them network:** Identify individuals in the company who you think could provide growth opportunities, guidance, insight, and even more networking opportunities. Offer strategies for meeting those individuals, or help to arrange meetings.
- **Evaluate options:** Once you and your direct report have identified possible opportunities, help him or her evaluate their fit and learning potential. Again, use the language of interests, values, and skills in discussing an opportunity's potential.

## Reward managers for helping others

Do you supervise managers who have direct reports? If so, you can reinforce the message that helping others manage their professional development is something your company values.

How? By rewarding managers who excel at this responsibility. Consider:

- Evaluating your managers' success in this area as a regular part of performance reviews
- Tying compensation to their performance in developing the career of their direct reports

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Are core business interests determined when you're young and do they remain unchanged throughout your life?**

They're generally determined by your early 20s. By that time, there's a discernible pattern, and the basic contours of that pattern remain remarkably stable.

### **How were the eight core business interests developed?**

They were developed from analysis of hundreds of people's responses on tests about their interests at work. The core interests describe fundamental, essential activities of business work.

### **What's the most common mistake people make in thinking about their careers?**

The most common mistake is basing career decisions on what you think you *should* do, or what you *can* do—not on what most interests or moves you. This is an easy trap to fall into.

### **What are some easy ways for people to identify their core business interests?**

You can perform active-imagination exercises, in which you reflect on what kinds of work have most inspired you or captured your attention in the past. You can also flip through six months' worth of issues of *Business Week* or *Fortune* and pay attention to what kinds of articles, advertisements, and so on, most draw your attention. Look especially for the difference between feeling that you have to *turn* your attention to a particular topic versus feeling that a topic *pulls* your attention.

### **Can a person have more than one core business interest?**

Yes. Often, a person will have two or three main interests, with perhaps one of them most dominant.

### **How have attitudes toward work and career changed?**

There's been a change in the idea of what a job is. Many people don't use the word *job* anymore; instead, they use **work opportunities**. More and more, there aren't jobs per se, as in, "Here's your job, your title, and your desk, and you'll probably be here for five years." Now, it's, "We've got a problem or a project, you've got a skill set and a background that can help us. When it's done, we'll have a conversation, and maybe there will be other problems you can help us with. And maybe there won't." The duration of the work opportunity is therefore *project* duration.

This is true not just for freelancers but also for full-time employees. You may remain an employee for a long time, but your responsibilities may change regularly. This is also true for employees of *any* age—not just 25-year-olds.

### **What proportion of people find satisfying work?**

It's an ongoing search for everyone these days. People do find it, but we all have to keep refining our concept of it and moving toward it. Even though our core business interests remain stable over time, the opportunities to express them depend on economic and other situations that are constantly changing. So, you've got to frequently reengage with the change process.

### **How can people broach the subject of career change with their immediate supervisors if their supervisors don't want to lose them?**

The best way is to frame the discussion in terms of "job sculpting": how you can redefine your current role so that it better matches your core business interests, work reward values, and skills. Also, come prepared with solutions for handling the ramifications of any change. For example, if you want to let go of certain responsibilities, how do you suggest they would be handled? If there's simply no opportunity to redefine your role, explore other opportunities within the company. In firms that emphasize retention, your supervisor will be rewarded for helping good employees find new opportunities inside the company.

**If I contact people to request an informational interview or a networking discussion, won't they think that I'm just trying to use them?**

No—not if you're sincere and you respect their time. Be sure to show them that you appreciate the information they're sharing. Remember: You're not so much asking for a job as you're asking for information. Most people enjoy talking about their work. Explain that someone else whom the person knows and respects recommended him or her as an excellent person for you to talk with, and ask for just 20 minutes of the person's time.

**It seems that required skills are always changing. How can I get the skills I need to keep moving forward in my career?**

Many people automatically assume that they have to go back to school to get a degree in order to acquire new skills. That's absolutely not true. Continuing education classes are one less time-consuming and less expensive alternative. But there are lots of other ways to learn, too—such as job shadowing, "stretch" assignments at work, seminars, video or audio tapes, books, newsletters, online or distance learning, volunteering opportunities, and so on. The key is to assess your options and pick the best ones for your learning style and your skill needs as well as for your budget and schedule.

**Everyone's so busy at my company that no one seems to know what's going on in departments other than their own. How can I find out about work opportunities under these conditions?**

You can start talking with people from other departments, to find out what kinds of work they do, what the culture is like in those departments, and so forth. Also, try asking to be invited to meetings that you normally might not think of attending. And, take advantage of all the companywide events and learning opportunities that your firm offers. That's a great way to simply start getting to know people and learning more about how the company operates. From there, you can begin identifying opportunities and drawing on the network of people you've established for information.

**Will my work reward values change much over the years?**

They will probably change somewhat, depending on the different phases of life you go through. For example, if you're starting a family, financial security and opportunities for long-term saving might become your top reward value. If you're just starting out in the work world, opportunities to travel might be your most important value. Reward values are more changeable than core business interests, but less changeable than skills—which employees often must update rapidly in order to keep contributing to their organizations and charting their own career paths.

## Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

### Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

### Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

## Scenario: Part 1



**Part 1**

Carly has been manager of new business development for ZyMold for five years.

One evening after a long day, she gets together with Tonya, a friend who has recently changed jobs. Carly finds herself feeling envious as Tonya excitedly describes her new position. Carly mentions that she recently received a raise and retention bonus, but she just isn't as enthusiastic about her work as she once was. She tells Tonya that, although she likes her team, she senses that something's missing from her work life. She wonders aloud whether she just needs a vacation.

What advice should Tonya give Carly?

- "It sounds like you need to take a close look at how you feel about your job. Maybe the work just isn't a good fit anymore."

**Correct choice.**

Carly should respond to signals that it may be time to assess how well her current work fits her interests, values, and abilities. The signals can differ for each person, but common indications that it's time for a change include: envy of what others are doing in their careers, restlessness or boredom, a general lack of enthusiasm or energy, and a sense of repetition at work.

- "Why don't you talk with some friends in other companies to see if you might want to change jobs? You know, schedule some informational interviews."

**Not the best choice.**

Before arranging informational interviews—conversations with people in various fields to learn more about career options—Carly should gain a solid understanding of her own interests, values, and abilities. By clarifying these matters first, she can then take a more focused approach to informational interviews and use her—and her interviewees'—time more effectively.

- "Sometimes you just need to take a break, even from a good situation. A vacation might be a great way to clarify your thinking."

**Not the best choice.**

The beneficial effects of a vacation won't last long if Carly is in fact ready to move on. Indeed, if she's deeply dissatisfied or bored with her current responsibilities, she may return from vacation feeling even more dissatisfied. She needs to combine



any break from work with thinking about her career and possible next steps.

## Scenario: Part 2

### Part 2

Carly has taken Tonya's advice and begun thinking about her lack of enthusiasm for her job. She decides to assess how well her current role fits her work interests and preferences.

As a first step toward generating insights, she creates a record of her observations about and experiences with work.

How should Carly go about creating and using this record?

- Carly should list all her past educational and work experiences—as far back as she can remember—and look for patterns in these experiences.

#### Not the best choice.

Listing past educational and work experiences may help Carly review what she has already accomplished, but it doesn't help her focus on her deepest business interests—enduring preferences that constitute the *most* important criteria for choosing a job. Everyone has different business interests, which may range from working with technology or numbers, generating theories, or creating something new to helping others, setting direction for a team, or persuading others.

- Carly should keep a running list of things she likes and dislikes about her own and other people's work responsibilities or environments and identify common themes among the listed items.

#### Correct choice.

Carly's record should consist of a private, running list of what she likes and doesn't like about her job or work environment. The entries could be about her job or other people's work, and about tasks, relationships, or the work environment itself. These might range from simple, such as "I need to work near a window," to more complex, such as "I can't stand working alone for long periods of time."

Honesty is key in creating such a record. Carly should see what themes emerge—and what they tell her about her core business interests (such as helping others or applying technology to

business problems) and work-reward values (such as work environment, financial gain, job security, prestige, or intellectual challenge).

- Carly should list all her skills, then list jobs that would require her skills. She should also identify which skills are "transferable"—useful across a wide range of work.

### Not the best choice.

Assessing skills is important, but only *after* Carly has identified her core business interests and values. When people focus on skills too early in their career management efforts, they often mistakenly conclude that they should "do what they're good at." But doing what you're good at won't keep you satisfied in *any* job if the work doesn't *also* let you express your core business interests and provide the rewards that mean the most to you.

## Scenario: Part 3

### Part 3

Carly has assessed her core business interests, values, and abilities and has identified a few gaps between them and her current role at ZyMold. She decides to learn whether other kinds of work—for example, new business development focusing on the Internet—may better fit her preferences and skills.

Carly likes the culture at ZyMold, so she wants to explore the possibility of either moving to a different role within the company or working with her supervisor to redefine her existing role for a better fit.

However, to maintain her confidentiality during this early exploratory stage, she arranges several informational interviews with people who do Internet business development at other companies.

Which question should Carly ask during an informational interview?

- "Do you currently have any openings in your group for which I might be qualified?"

### Not the best choice.

Carly should not use informational interviews to ask for a job or to pressure the interviewee into assessing her skills. Rather, she should focus on learning about the work in question. When arranging an informational interview, she should specify that she's looking for information—not a job.

- "What do you find most and least enjoyable about this work?"

**Good choice.**

Questions about job specifics are important during informational interviewing. Additional questions about job specifics might include: "What's a typical day like for you? What talents or skills are most crucial to success in this work? What attitudes or values are important?"

- "What are the key trends and typical salaries for this type of work?"

**Good choice.**

Questions about job specifics are important during informational interviewing. Additional questions about job specifics might include: "What's a typical day like for you? What talents or skills are most crucial to success in this work? What attitudes or values are important?"

## Scenario: Conclusion

### Conclusion

To find enduring satisfaction in your work, identify your core business interests first, and then your values and abilities. You want to find work that aligns with your deepest business interests. Recording your observations about and experiences with work is a good first step to identifying your preferences and values. Informational interviews can eventually help you clarify a possible new career direction.

In today's world, business professionals need to take responsibility for managing their own careers. This requires knowing when it's time to explore new work opportunities, and taking the initiative to make changes in their work life.

## Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

What three self-knowledge areas are the most important in defining and navigating your career path?

- Your five-year goals, family values, and financial needs

**Not the best choice.**

Though five-year goals, family values, and financial needs play a role in your career planning, they are not the most important self-knowledge areas for defining and navigating your career path. The correct answer is "Your core business interests, work values, and skills." By understanding

what business activities interest you, what workplace rewards you value most, and what you do best, you can define your professional goals.

- Your core business interests, work values, and skills

**Correct choice.**

These three self-knowledge areas together form the basis for guiding your career. By understanding what business activities interest you, what workplace rewards you value most, and what you do best, you can define your professional goals.

- Your short- and long-term goals, core business interests, and skills

**Not the best choice.**

Core business interests and skills are two of the three self-knowledge areas most important in defining and navigating your career path, but the third one is your core business interests, not short- and long-term goals. By understanding what business activities interest you, what workplace rewards you value most, and what you do best, you can define your professional goals.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

What are the three main information sources for knowing yourself?

- Yourself, others (colleagues, friends, and family), and assessment tools

**Correct choice.**

By getting to know your core business interests, work reward values, and skills through self-reflection exercises; by collecting feedback from colleagues, friends, and family; and by using any of the available assessment tools, you compile a powerful body of knowledge that will let you define and pursue the best career opportunities for you.

- Your boss, your night-time dreams, and a group-therapy program

**Not the best choice.**

These information sources omit one especially important source—you!—that you can mine by trying self-reflection and active-imagination exercises, among other methods.

- Your family, your friends, and your career counselor

**Not the best choice.**

These information sources omit one especially important source—you!—that you can mine by trying self-reflection and active-imagination exercises, among other methods.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

Who is most responsible for management of your career?

- [Your supervisor](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Because of dramatic changes in the world of work, employees themselves have had to take charge of their own professional development instead of expecting their supervisors to do so. The traditional unspoken "contract" between organizations and workers—by which managers took responsibility for their direct reports' employability—no longer exists at many companies.

- [Your company overall \(including its career-resources department, if it has one\)](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Because of dramatic changes in the world of work, employees' themselves have had to take charge of their own professional development instead of expecting their companies to do so. The traditional unspoken "contract" between organizations and workers—by which the company took responsibility for individuals' employability—no longer exists at many organizations.

- [You](#)

**Correct choice.**

The business world has experienced enormous, rapidly accelerating changes. The traditional unspoken contract between employer and employee—in which companies took responsibility for employees' career paths—no longer exists at many companies. Therefore, each of us is responsible for managing our own professional development.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

Of your core business interests, work values, and skills, which one area is the most important in identifying appropriate growth opportunities at work?

- [Core business interests](#)

**Correct choice.**

If you're not passionately interested in your work, you'll soon get bored or "burn out"—no matter how good you are at your job or how much it offers the rewards you value the most.

- [Work values](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Work values are important, but they're not as stable over time as core business interests. Therefore, it's your core business interests that are most important in identifying appropriate growth opportunities at work. If your work doesn't satisfy your deepest passions, you'll soon get bored or "burn out"—no matter how good you are at your job or how much it offers the rewards you value the most.

- Skills

**Not the best choice.**

Skills are important, but they're not as stable over time as core business interests. Therefore, it's your core business interests that are most important in identifying appropriate growth opportunities at work. If your work doesn't satisfy your deepest passions, you'll soon get bored or "burn out"—no matter how good you are at your job or how much it offers the rewards you value the most.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

Which of the following are the most important benefits of your taking charge of your own career?

- You're guaranteed to earn more money and get promoted.

**Not the best choice.**

Taking charge of your own career doesn't necessarily guarantee that you'll earn more money and get promoted. Instead, the key benefits of your taking charge of your career are that you find more satisfaction in your work. When you're more satisfied at work, you perform better and feel more committed to your job and organization—which also helps your company.

- Your company doesn't have to invest in a career center.

**Not the best choice.**

Taking charge of your own career doesn't necessarily mean that your company won't invest in a career center. Instead, the key benefits of your taking charge of your career are that you find more satisfaction in your work. When you're more satisfied at work, you perform better and feel more committed to your job and organization—which also helps your company.

- You find more satisfaction in your work and become a more valuable employee for your company.

**Correct choice.**

When you manage your own career, you help yourself derive more satisfaction from your work. When you're more satisfied at work, you perform better and feel more committed to your job and organization—which also helps your company.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

Which of the following are examples of the eight core business functions that let you express your deepest work interests?

- Enterprise Control, Influence Through Language and Ideas, and Using Your Intuition

**Not the best choice.**

Though Enterprise Control as well as Influence Through Language and Ideas are two of the eight core business functions, Using Your Intuition is not.

The eight core business interests are: (1) Application of Technology; (2) Quantitative Analysis; (3) Theory Development and Conceptual Thinking; (4) Creative Production; (5) Counseling and Mentoring; (6) Managing People and Relationships; (7) Enterprise Control; and (8) Influence Through Language and Ideas.

Core business interests are not hobbies or topical enthusiasms. Rather, they're long-held, emotionally driven passions. They derive from your personality and influence the kinds of activities that make you happy.

- [Application of Technology, Counseling and Mentoring, and Enterprise Control](#)

**Correct choice.**

All three of these functions let you express your deepest work interests. Core business interests are not hobbies or topical enthusiasms. Rather, they're long-held, emotionally driven passions. They derive from your personality and influence the kinds of activities that make you happy.

The eight core business interests are: (1) Application of Technology; (2) Quantitative Analysis; (3) Theory Development and Conceptual Thinking; (4) Creative Production; (5) Counseling and Mentoring; (6) Managing People and Relationships; (7) Enterprise Control; and (8) Influence Through Language and Ideas.

- [Understanding Spreadsheets, Giving Inspiring Speeches, and Managing Work/Life Balance](#)

**Not the best choice.**

None of these functions are examples of the eight core business functions.

The eight core business interests are: (1) Application of Technology; (2) Quantitative Analysis; (3) Theory Development and Conceptual Thinking; (4) Creative Production; (5) Counseling and Mentoring; (6) Managing People and Relationships; (7) Enterprise Control; and (8) Influence Through Language and Ideas.

Core business interests are not hobbies or topical enthusiasms. Rather, they're long-held, emotionally driven passions. They derive from your personality and influence the kinds of activities that make you happy.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

Decide whether the following statement is true or false: To better match your work with your core business interests, values, and skills, you can collaborate with your supervisor to redefine your current role.

- [True](#)

**Correct choice.**

Always start by assuming that you can redefine your current role to better suit you. If you're a high performer, your supervisor will likely be glad to support your efforts in this area. After all, he or she will get to keep you rather than lose you to another position in the company.

- **False**

**Not the best choice.**

This statement is actually true. Always assume that you can redefine your current role to better suit you. Especially if you're a high performer, your supervisor will likely be glad to support your efforts in this area. After all, he or she will get to keep you rather than lose you to another position in the company.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

Which of the following metaphors best captures the nature of career development today as opposed to earlier times?

- **A lattice versus a ladder**

**Correct choice.**

A lattice conveys the idea that professional development opportunities now exist at all levels and in all departments within most organizations. You can move freely among them, depending on which opportunities best suit you and your organization.

- **A bicycle versus a pogo stick**

**Not the best choice.**

A bicycle suggests forward motion versus the up-and-down motion of a pogo stick; thus, it doesn't accurately capture the nature of career development today as opposed to earlier times. Career development has changed from a "ladder" approach (climbing your way to the top of your career) to a "lattice" approach (moving freely and creatively among opportunities at all levels and in all departments of your organization).

- **A moored rowboat versus a ship tossing on the ocean**

**Not the best choice.**

A moored boat suggests the notion of arriving safely and permanently at your career destination versus tossing about in a vast ocean; thus, it doesn't accurately capture the nature of career development today as opposed to earlier times. Career development has changed from a "ladder" approach (climbing your way to the top of your career) to a "lattice" approach (moving freely and creatively among opportunities at all levels and in all departments of your organization).

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 9



The best developmental opportunities in your organization:

- Perfectly match your interests, values, and skills

**Not the best choice.**

Finding something that perfectly matches your interests, values, and skills won't help you "stretch"—that is, attain new skills and knowledge. You want development opportunities to help you hone new skills and acquire new knowledge—that's what makes work more satisfying to you, and you more valuable to your company. But don't pick an assignment that stretches you too much: A good rule of thumb is that if you think it will take you more than six months to deliver excellent performance in the new role, the assignment probably will be *too* much of a stretch.

- "Stretch" you by offering challenges that encourage you to learn new skills and knowledge

**Correct choice.**

You want development opportunities to help you hone new skills and acquire new knowledge—that's what makes work more satisfying to you, and you more valuable to your company. But don't pick an assignment that stretches you too much: A good rule of thumb is that if you think it will take you more than six months to deliver excellent performance in the new role, the assignment probably will be *too* much of a stretch.

- Force you to try work that you know nothing about

**Not the best choice.**

Trying your hand at work you know nothing about won't help you "stretch"—that is, attain new skills and knowledge. You want development opportunities to help you hone new skills and acquire new knowledge—that's what makes work more satisfying to you, and you more valuable to your company. But don't pick an assignment that stretches you too much: A good rule of thumb is that if you think it will take you more than six months to deliver excellent performance in the new role, the assignment probably will be *too* much of a stretch.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

Decide whether the following statement is true or false: To obtain the skills you need to perform in a new position, you must go back to school and earn a degree.

- True

**Not the best choice.**

This statement is actually false. There are many other ways to gain new skills besides going back to school. These include volunteering, reading magazines, job sharing, and so forth—steps that don't require the time and expense of getting a new degree.

- False

**Correct choice.**

There are many other ways to gain new skills besides going back to school. These include volunteering, reading magazines, job sharing, and so forth—steps that don't require the time and expense of getting a new degree.

## Check Your Knowledge: Results

# Your score:

## Steps for clarifying your work reward values

### 1. Write all the work reward values you can think of on index cards, one value per card.

No list can be exhaustive, so feel free to add as many values as you think are important in selecting the right development opportunities for yourself.

Workplace values could include:

- An environment of openness, camaraderie, and friendliness
- Access to experts in the industry
- Benefits such as child or elder care
- Forms of compensation such as stock options, pension plans, and profit sharing
- Scheduling options such as flex-time, telecommuting, and sabbaticals

### 2. On each card, write a short statement about what that value means to you.

Values are highly abstract and can mean different things to different people, depending on a person's culture, personality, family background, and so forth.

For example, one person's idea of work/life balance might be working no more than 40 hours a week. Another person's idea of work/life balance might be working up to 60 hours a week but having time on the weekends to spend with family.

### 3. Scatter the index cards on a table.

### 4. Arrange the cards in order of importance.

If two or more values seem equally important to you, place them side by side. If you decide that a value has no real importance to you after all, set that card aside.

### 5. Note the order you've settled on.

Don't worry about which values seem to be "rising to the surface" at this point, or whether you're having trouble deciding which of two seemingly equally important values should come first. Just make a mental or written note that summarizes what you see happening at this stage.

### 6. Set the stack of cards aside for a week or two.

### 7. Revisit the exercise to see if anything has shifted.

Repeat the process until you feel confident that your hierarchy of cards accurately reflects your work values.

For example, suppose you do the exercise five times, and each time "affiliation" (working with colleagues you like, respect, and admire) ends up being in one of the top three positions in your card hierarchy. You can feel fairly confident that this is one of your most important values.

8. **Think of your top three or four values as your "shopping list" when you're considering new developmental opportunities.**

## Steps for defining your career target

1. **Review what you've discovered about your core business interests, your work reward values, and your skills in other parts of this topic.**

Use the information and the exercises in the Learn section of this topic, as well as the various tools and tips in this topic, to strengthen your knowledge of your core business interests, values, and skills. Remember: Keep thinking about these three aspects in that order of importance.

For example, to show you how defining a career target might work, we'll begin with a very simplified example here (for a fictitious person named Moira) that we'll carry through the rest of the steps.

**Note:** Defining your own career target would involve more complex and numerous responses in some of the steps that follow.

Moira is currently working as a budget analyst. But she has discovered that she loves being in charge of projects (Enterprise Control) and motivating other people (Influence through Language and Ideas). Her most important work reward values are the ability to work flexible hours; the opportunity to work for a small, growing start-up or a relatively autonomous department within a large organization; and access to state-of-the-art technology at work. Her strongest skills are speaking and writing persuasively, organizing large volumes of varied data, and juggling many projects at once without losing track or missing deadlines.

2. **List and describe the career opportunities at your organization.**

Don't feel that you have to write down every single career opportunity that's available throughout your organization. But be more inclusive rather than less: List all those that you think would even remotely appeal to you.

For example, Moira would like to strengthen her ability to develop "big-picture" strategies and mobilize support for them among employees. So, she writes down opportunities such as: "Lead new-product design department to ensure that the department creates high-quality products on spec and on time," "Design and direct innovative marketing campaigns that address changes in competition and consumer trends and that put our products at the forefront of the market," "Communicate the company's overall strategy throughout the organization through newsletters and companywide meetings," and so forth.

3. **Draw three concentric circles.**

That is, draw a large circle on a piece of paper. Within that large circle, draw a somewhat smaller circle. (Make the second circle small enough so that you have room to write in between the two

circles.) Within that somewhat smaller circle, draw another circle. That central, smallest circle is your career "bull's-eye."

**4. Identify the opportunities that match your core business interests.**

Look for opportunities that offer you a chance to express your core interests.

For example, in our fictitious example, Moira decides to write down all three opportunities that she identified in Step 2, because they all, in some way, involve being in charge of teams or projects, influencing others, or a combination of both.

**5. In the *outermost* circle of your career bull's-eye, write down the opportunities you identified in Step 4. (This outermost circle is your core-interests circle.)**

**6. In your core-interests circle, underline or highlight those opportunities that also match your most important work reward values.**

For example, through networking and a few informational interviews, Moira discovers that the "Communicating the company's overall strategy throughout the organization through newsletters and companywide meetings" position requires not only strict adherence to a 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule but also frequent overtime with little warning. But the other two opportunities she identified in Step 2 offer flexible schedules, and match her other important values. So she underlines them.

**7. Copy the opportunities you underlined in Step 6 into the next inner circle. (This next inner circle is your important-values circle.)**

**8. Now underline or highlight those opportunities in your important-values circle that also match the skills you now possess or skills that you could obtain relatively easily.**

Don't worry if your skills don't exactly match those required by the opportunities you've now narrowed down. Why? Two reasons:

- Skills are a lot easier to change than core business interests or work reward values.
- It's most important that an opportunity match your interests; if it doesn't, you won't remain happy in that position for very long—no matter how good you are at it!

For example, Moira finds out that "Designing and directing innovative marketing campaigns that address changes in competition and consumer trends and that put our products at the forefront of the market" requires proven experience in writing marketing and advertising copy. She does not have skill or experience in this area and is not interested in developing it. However, "Leading the new-product design department to ensure that the department creates high-quality products on spec and on time" sounds more promising: It requires knowledge of basic product design, which Moira can learn by taking a continuing-education course that the company will pay for. She also finds the idea of learning about product design interesting and exciting. Finally, it requires her other existing, strongest skills, too. So, she underlines that opportunity in her important-values circle.

**9. Copy the opportunities you underlined in Step 8 into the centermost circle.**

Bull's-eye! You've now defined your career target: work that matches your core business interests, your most important work reward values, and your skills.

For example, Moira's career bull's-eye is "Leading the new-product design department to ensure that the department creates high-quality products on spec and on time." It

matches her core business interests and most important work reward values. It also requires a skill that she's interested in developing—and is able to develop affordably through the help of her company.

## Steps for defining and obtaining new skills

### 1. Identify what you need to learn and why you need to learn it.

There are different *kinds* of skills, and understanding which kind you want to develop and why will shape the rest of the skills-development process.

The various kinds of skills include:

- **Functional, transferable skills** such as clear writing or speaking, working with numbers, and motivating people.
- **Task-oriented skills** such as writing a computer program in C++, assembling a particular consumer product, and using a desktop-publishing software package.
- **Personal skills** (also called self-management skills) such as being organized, juggling many tasks at once, and remaining calm during times of chaos.
- **Interpersonal skills** such as the ability to lead a discussion, negotiate, inspire teamwork (some of these will also be transferable from one job to another).
- **Industry-specific skills** which are required for performance of a particular job (some may be entry level and required, while others may be advanced and more dependent on experience or certification).

Ask yourself why you want to learn particular skills.

For example:

- You're interested in exploring work that's very different from what you're doing now. Therefore, by assessing your transferable skills, you can identify skills you could use in this job, and only seek training on additional, necessary job-specific skills.
- You need particular task-oriented skills to begin contributing immediately in a highly technical new job.
- You need to learn the skill, such as project-management, to perform better in your current or future position.

### 2. Select the ways you want to learn.

In completing this step, cast your net wide! You've got many different options for learning at your disposal—in addition to the more commonly known ones such as going back to school. Also, different people learn best through different learning channels and materials. Think about which channels and materials work best for you.

For example:

- Home-study courses
- Direct observation of someone else
- Internships
- Informational interviews
- Volunteer work
- Audio- and videotapes

- Films
- Books, newsletters, and trade journals
- Distance-learning options, such as online courses
- Seminars or workshops

### 3. Conduct research to identify specific learning options.

With this step, you specify how you'll acquire the skills you're interested in. This requires some work—but it's well worth the effort.

Try exploring these resources:

- Internal training resources, if your organization has them
- Recommendations from training manager, peers, supervisor, others
- Online subject search for courses and materials
- Professional association resources, if you are a member
- Career centers
- Your local library
- Adult-education centers
- Community colleges
- University extension offices
- Bookstores

You can also try associations, such as these:

- The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education
- The American Management Association
- Professional associations (such as the American Marketing Association and the Society for Human Resource Management)
- American Society for Training and Development

Many of these associations offer great courses for members and nonmembers.

### 4. Analyze your learning options.

Now that you've identified the skills you want to develop and have researched how you might acquire them, it's time to assess the relative merits of the various options.

Evaluate each option you're considering according to the following criteria:

- Quality of instruction (which you can judge by asking people who have taken that particular training before)
- Cost
- Time required
- Other variables important to you, such as location, convenience, and delivery method, including online alternatives

Weigh these factors and decide which options best meet your requirements and situation.

### 5. Develop a training strategy and schedule.

Clarify how and by when you'll acquire the skills.

For example, you can use a form like the one shown below, or incorporate this into a more complete Individual Development Plan.

### Skill Acquisition Form

Skills to Acquire	How?	By When?
Writing computer programs in C++	Take adult-education night class from local vocational school.	Fall 2001
Managing stress	Take online course on stress management and discuss tactics with a group of colleagues.	End of next week

### Steps for preparing for an informational interview

1. **Think of three to five individuals who are currently doing the kind of work you're interested in.**
2. **Contact them (by phone, by e-mail, or in person).**

If you already know the people in these positions, contact them (by phone or e-mail) and set up appointments. If you don't, ask people you do know to refer you. In other words, take advantage of your existing networks. In this case, when you make the phone call, mention that "Thomas" or "Maria" (whom they know and respect) suggested that the person is an outstanding resource whom you should talk to.

Don't feel shy or timid when contacting someone you don't know. Remember: When you conduct an informational interview, your primary goal is to gain information—not necessarily a job offer. When you're contacting people, you're flattering them by soliciting their expert opinions. Many people are happy to talk about their work and to be consulted as experts if you respect their time (that is, ask for no more than 20 minutes) and make use of the insights they share.

If you're still a bit nervous about asking for an informational interview, here's a possible template to use: "Hi, Marshall. My name's Pierre Juneau. I'm currently working as a systems analyst but would like to learn more about financial analysis. My colleague Mamta Chodhuri told me that you would be a great person for me to talk with. Can you give me 20 minutes of your time to help me understand what work in this area is like?"

3. **Set a time and meeting place for an appointment.**

Consider inviting informational interviewees to lunch. This approach has two benefits:

- **Your interviewees' time is valuable.** If you interview them at their place of work, you're more apt to be taking them away from their duties—which may make it more difficult for

them to agree to an interview.

- **It's good form.** You're asking them to give you something (information). It's only right that you give them something, too (lunch). Consider the lunch a token of your appreciation for their valuable time and vital information.

But don't be put off if they decline a lunch offer. They may prefer to meet in their own office, where they can better control the time they spend.

#### 4. Prepare a list of questions that you'd like to ask the interviewee.

These can range from "What do you/don't you like most about your work?" and "What's an average day like for you?" to "How is the 'game' played in this area of work? How do you get to the top?" and "What do you see as the department's biggest challenge?" Make your own list using questions that are important to you.

## Steps for sculpting your job

### 1. Look at the career "bull's-eye" you created in Steps for defining your career target.

You defined your career target by narrowing down all the opportunities available at your company to those that best match:

- Your core business interests
- Your most important work reward values
- Those skills you already possess or can develop relatively easily

### 2. Ask yourself, "Where is the mismatch between my job and the kinds of opportunities that are in my career target?"

Divide a piece of paper into three columns. Write "Interests" at the top of the left-hand column, "Values" at the top of the middle column, and "Skills" at the top of the right-hand column. Write down every area you can think of in which your current role does not suit your core interests, values, and/or skills.

### 3. Try to think of ways to reshape your current role so that it more closely matches your core business interests, work reward values, and skills.

### 4. Talk with your supervisor about redefining your current role so as to get a better match.

When you meet with your supervisor, keep the following tips in mind:

- Start by stating the reason that you want to brainstorm ways to sculpt your job: Your current role doesn't suit you as well as it could because \_\_\_\_\_. (Remember to use the language of core interests, values, and skills.)
- If possible, be ready to offer solutions and ideas for reshaping your current role so that it's a better match for you *and* your organization. (Don't just bring a problem; bring a problem *and* a solution.) Your solutions should include explanations of who will handle any responsibilities you want to let go.
- Remember that *you're* in charge of your career management. It's up to you to "sell" the idea of change to your supervisor. Explain to him or her how sculpting your job not only benefits you; it also benefits your supervisor and your organization overall.

## Tips for choosing the right developmental opportunities



- Clarify your core business interests, reward values, and skills before you do anything else.
  - Evaluate how well various development opportunities match those interests, values, and skills.
  - If an opportunity closely matches your interests and values, it could be an excellent next move for you. If you lack one or more of the skills that it requires, consider how you might develop it.
  - Think long term—that is, several career moves ahead—rather than just about your next move.
  - Ask yourself what you need to learn in order to get where you want to go in the long run, and then—
  - Think about ways to gain that knowledge or experience.
  - Always, always beware the "siren songs"—those expectations and "pulls" that might lead you down the wrong career path (and be aware of any fears that could result in your setting your sights too low, limiting your ultimate success).
- 
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## Tips for choosing a career counselor

- Start with your company's internal career counselor—it's free, and he or she can help you use and interpret assessment tools, as well as define and work toward your career target. And that person knows about all the work opportunities available in your company.
- If you're considering hiring an independent career counselor, ask friends for recommendations.
- Clarify what you're looking for: Help taking and interpreting specific assessment tests? Tips on clarifying and working toward your work goals? Detailed information on jobs that are available in your company?
- Don't be afraid to shop around: Find a career counselor whose style you're comfortable with, and who is going to encourage and support you in your professional exploration.
- Ask potential career counselors—whether internal or independent—to describe their philosophy, explain what kinds of clients and questions they typically work with, and describe their successes and the methods they used to achieve them. Be leery of counselors who use the same approach (the same tests, for example) with everyone. This can indicate poor training and limited ability—in career counseling, one size doesn't fit all.
- Ask for references—and then take the time to call the references to ask about their experiences with that counselor.
- When considering an independent career counselor, be clear about compensation. For example, is there a charge for phone conversations? In addition to learning the hourly rate, ask what the counselor's average client usually ends up paying—the person who charges a higher hourly rate may end up costing less!
- All else being equal, pick a career counselor who you think can also provide you with great networking opportunities; that is, someone who may know other people who do the kinds of work that interests you.

- Be careful! In most places, anyone can call himself or herself a "career counselor" or "career coach," whether or not he or she has any training or experience! And some counseling organizations will use high-pressure sales techniques—two salespeople for one customer, saying, "You know, we only accept the highest potential people." (Are you worthy?) Such places might charge enormous flat fees to imply higher quality. Ask for credentials, and don't sign a contract unless you've read it carefully.

## Tips for choosing mentors

- Look for mentors with whom you can establish a mutually beneficial relationship. (One benefit for the mentor is having the satisfaction of helping another person develop into the best that he or she can be.)
- The best mentors help you find progressively more challenging assignments in which you can learn, cultivate an ever wider network of professional relationships, and contribute to the organization.
- Establish mentoring relationships with (1) one person within your company (your *company* mentor), (2) another person who has mastered the area of expertise you're interested in (your skill mentor), and (3) one whose overall career path you find enviable (your career strategy mentor).
- For your company mentor, consider choosing a recent retiree—someone whose influence within the company is still strong—or someone who shares a passionate interest of yours.
- For your skill mentor, choose someone who possesses a higher level of functional experience than you do. Trade and professional groups are good places to look for skill mentors.
- For your career mentor, think of a person whom you look up to as an ideal as you chart your professional direction. This is someone who is presently where you would like to be in 10 or 20 years.

## Tips for networking

- Think of networking as expanding your web of relationships and developing mutually supportive relationships. Every time you talk with someone new about work, make an effort not only to learn something new about the other person but also to share something about yourself with him or her.
- Make an effort to get to know people beyond the circle of individuals with whom you interact on the basis of habit or with whom you're most comfortable.
- In your company directory, identify people who do work that interests you, and get to know them. Tell them you're clarifying your professional-development goals, and ask to have a conversation with them sometime about their work.
- Get to know people in your company who you think can help you learn about the kinds of work your organization does and how it operates.
- Seize opportunities to meet people from all different parts of the company; for example, attend staffwide meetings and any training opportunities that arise. And make sure to extend your network beyond your organization—if your company eliminates your position, you'll be glad you know people in other places.
- If you learn that someone's holding a meeting that interests you, ask him or her if it's okay for you attend.
- Whenever you're talking with others about work, always be aware of the context from which they're speaking. For instance, if you know that someone has a bad relationship with his boss,

and he says that he hates his job, don't automatically assume that the work would not interest you.

## Tips for informational interviewing

- Often in an informational interview, you will have two agendas: (1) to learn something, and (2) *possibly* to get a job offer. Therefore, come prepared to learn and to show your best side.
- If you're nervous about asking someone for an informational interview, remember: You're not asking people for a job—you're primarily asking for information about their work or their department. Most people are happy to help if you keep the meeting short (about 20 minutes).
- Contact potential interviewees by phone or e-mail; that way, if they're busy, they can return your call or message when it's more convenient for them.
- Try framing your phone or e-mail request for an informational interview in approximately these words: "Hello, Carmen. My name's Alexander Freiburg. I'm a publications manager here at ABC Co., and I'm interested in learning more about systems analysis. My colleague Sasha White said that you'd be a great person for me to speak with. Would you be able to talk with me for few moments, either now or at some other time? I won't take more than 20 minutes of your time."
- If you sense that someone is agreeable to meeting with you, ask for a specific appointment at a time convenient to him or her. If the person is not available by phone or e-mail, contact an assistant. Call the day before or the morning of the appointment to confirm.
- Start off by interviewing with people who are the least likely to offer you a job (or for whom you would least want to work)—and ask your most basic questions there. Then you'll be more informed and make a stronger impression when you meet with people who are more likely to have a job offer that you would want.
- Arrive for the interview a few minutes early.
- Stick to the time limit that you and the interviewee agreed on. Start concluding the meeting a few minutes before the allotted time limit, to let the interviewee know that you're honoring your agreement.
- Dress approximately as formally or informally as you expect your interviewee to be dressed—or, to play it safe, one step more formally—but never less formally.
- As one of your questions to the interviewee, ask what he or she feels is the biggest challenge facing their department. That way, if you end up exploring a possible job opportunity with that person, you can position yourself specifically as someone who can help solve that problem.
- Resolve not to leave the interview without the name of at least one more person you can contact for a different point of view—either inside or outside of the interviewee's organization.
- Ask your interviewee if he or she knows of other opportunities that might interest you.

## Tips for getting the skills you need

- Don't assume that you have to go back to school for a new degree or certification to get the skills that a new work role requires.
- Find out what kinds of skill-development opportunities your company offers. These might include in-house or offsite seminars, apprenticeships, or workshops.
- Explore special-assignment or rotational roles in your company. These can range from one-day to six-month assignments—or longer—depending on the program and opportunity.
- There are lots of different ways to learn something new: Consider doing some volunteer work that would help you hone a particular skill, subscribing to skills-oriented newsletters or magazines, using audio- and videotapes, taking a select course or two at your local college, and reading books.

- If you do want to earn a new degree, don't assume that you have to go the whole route on a college campus. Some degree programs give credit for work experience.
- Consider exploring alternatives to classroom-based courses, such as distance learning, self-paced study programs, and online classes.
- Visit your company's career center, as well as your town library, to research various learning options. Adult-education centers, community colleges, university extension offices, and bookstores also make excellent resources.
- If you're worried about tuition costs, visit a financial-aid counselor, either at a school you're considering attending or at your local community college or career center. Also, some companies offer tuition reimbursement for courses that directly relate to your work; check with your organization's career center or human resource department for information.
- Contact the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education for a directory of its member organizations and services. The American Management Association also has a wide range of courses. Finally, most professional associations (such as the American Marketing Association and the Society for Human Resource Management) also have courses available for their members.

## Tips for staying on course

- Beware the "*siren songs*" that often lure people to choose work that doesn't match their deepest interests: the promise of increased money and status, expectations of finding the perfect work situation, family expectations (whether you're aware of them or not), and excessive competitive striving.
- Understand any *fears* that may be keeping you from moving forward; for example, fear of failing at your new work, of losing the comforts and successes you've gained in your current role, or of seeming too aggressive or ambitious.
- Address any *lack of knowledge* that may be plaguing your career management efforts—such as a lack of knowledge about how your company or the business world works, or a lack of knowledge about yourself. Make clarifying and addressing knowledge gaps an ongoing process.
- Each year, set *development goals* for yourself, even if you're already busy at work. This makes professional development your highest priority.
- Keep dreaming about your ideal work situation and planning concrete ways to get there.
- Develop your *work ethic*. Dedicate yourself to being the best professional you can be, and embrace the responsibility of managing your own professional growth.
- When choosing new opportunities, make sure they fit your core business interests, values, and skills—and that they "stretch" you just a little. Otherwise, you may end up on the wrong path.

## Tips for talking with your supervisor about change

- Remember that this is *your* meeting to lead!
- Schedule the meeting in a neutral site, such as a conference room, rather than in your supervisor's office.
- Before the meeting, review all the work you've done so far in your professional-development exploration, so that you'll have the details fresh in your mind.
- Try to anticipate your supervisor's concerns before the meeting. If you're a high performer, he or she may well be reluctant to change things at all. And your supervisor may find the idea of losing you to a promotion or other kind of job change quite painful. Think of ways to acknowledge and address such concerns.

- Come to the meeting with clear statements about why you'd like to make changes, and with clear proposals for solutions—whether those solutions involve redefining your role ("job sculpting"), getting promoted, or moving to a new role. Be ready to sell your ideas!
- Be willing to brainstorm ideas for how your current responsibilities might be handled if your supervisor agrees to "sculpt" your job or loses you to a promotion. If you and your manager decide to job sculpt, for example, point out how responsibilities that you want to let go of might be folded into another role.
- Let your supervisor know that you appreciate his or her support and insight, and that you're aware (assuming that this is true) that he or she has a strong reputation for supporting career development among employees. This is especially important in companies that make career development a priority.
- Bring to the meeting copies of any materials (assessment-tool results, worksheets, notes, as so on) that you are willing to share with your supervisor. You may even want to give these materials to your supervisor before the meeting so that he or she can be better prepared for your conversation.
- Clarify your desired outcome for the meeting; for instance, a new assignment, feedback or insight from your supervisor, or networking assistance.
- Ask for your supervisor's perceptions of your interests, values, and skills, and for his or her view of potential areas for your development.
- End the meeting with a clear discussion of next steps—what they are, and who will do them.

## Tips for conducting a professional development review

- Conduct Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) on a regular basis with your direct reports—ideally, every six months.
- Don't be uncomfortable if a direct report tells you that he or she would like to make some work changes. It doesn't necessarily mean that the person no longer wants to report to you or is deeply unhappy at work, or that he or she is thinking about leaving the company. All it means is that the person is wisely taking charge of his or her career-development path.
- Initiate professional-development discussions yourself—people like to work for managers who help them in this way.
- If your direct report seems somewhat uncomfortable or nervous about discussing change, reassure him or her that professional-development conversations are valuable for everyone concerned, as well as for the organization.
- Review beforehand any materials that your direct report feels comfortable sharing with you, and prepare questions and ideas ahead of time.
- Use the language of core business interests, reward values, and skills to help direct reports talk about work changes.
- In discussing change options, think first about job sculpting (redefining current roles), second about changing the person's responsibilities, and third about helping the person move to a different position within the company.
- During a PDR, ask the person how he or she is doing in general. Is he happy with his work? Is she satisfied overall with her job? Be sure the person knows that you genuinely want to help. Give him or her plenty of time to talk, and listen carefully to what is said.

## Discovery log





Writing Job Descriptions				
Other:				
<b>Technology and Computer Skills</b>				
Keyboarding				
Word Processing				
Spreadsheet				
HTML				
XML				
Project Management				
E-mail				
Presentation Software				
Graphics Software				
Other:				
<b>Financial Skills</b>				
Budgeting				
Financial Analysis				
Cost Accounting				
Forecasting				
Tracking and Management				
Preparing a Business Plan				
Preparing an Investment Initiative				
Cash-Flow Analysis				
Break-even Analysis				
Quantitative Analysis				
Other:				
<b>Supervisory Skills</b>				
Hiring				
Coaching				
Delegating				
Setting Goals and Objectives				
Directing				
Assessing Performance				
Leading				
Motivating				
Training and Support Development				
Analyzing Work Flow and Processes				
Recruiting and Retention				
Administrative Management				
Other:				
<b>Management Skills</b>				
Managing Change				
Managing Customers, Internal and/or External				
Project Management				
Production or Implementation Management				
Managing Upward				
Solving Business Problems				
Business Analysis, Critical Thinking				
Internal Consulting and Networking				
Vendor Management				
Strategic Planning				
Tactical Planning				
Creative Thinking, Brainstorming				
Managing for Innovation				
Managing a Diverse Work Force				
International Marketing				
<b>Teamwork Skills</b>				
Leading a Team				
Group Problem Solving				
Keeping Teams on Target				
Working with a Virtual Team				
Assuming Team Membership Roles				
Collaborating				
Other:				
<b>Self-Management Skills</b>				
Self-Awareness				
Emotional Intelligence				
Time Management				
Balancing Work and Life				
Career Development				
Stress Management				
Limit Setting and Goal Setting				
Using Power and Authority Positively				
Seeing Multiple Perspectives				
Other:				
<b>Sales and Marketing Skills</b>				
Product Marketing				

Direct Marketing				
Market Research (perform or direct)				
Telemarketing				
Promotions				
Publicity				
Electronic Marketing				
Trade Show/Exhibits Management				
Consumer Marketing				
Business to Business Marketing				
Competitive Analysis and Planning				
Direct Sales				
Sales Forecasting				
Telesales				
Consultative Selling				
Other:				
<b>Physical and Manual Dexterity Skills</b>				
Assembling, Constructing or Building				
Operating Tools or Machinery				
Fixing or Repairing				
Ability to Train Others on Tasks				
<b>Other Industry and/or Job-Specific Skills (List)</b>				

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## Informational interviewing worksheet



<i>Informational Interviewing Worksheet</i>	
<i>Use this form to help you prepare for an informational interview.</i>	
<b>Discussion with:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	
What do you really want to get out of this interview? What would make it successful for you?	
<b>Marketplace</b>	
What are your projections for this type of work or industry? Is it stable, growing, declining?	
What are the key trends or issues? New developments? Key challenges?	
What and where are the opportunities?	
What are typical salaries in this type of job, entry-level to experienced? What are the opportunities for career growth?	
<b>Entry into Position</b>	
When and how did you get involved in this work?	
What was your training and background? Is this typical for people in your position and in similar positions?	
How important are specific credentials for entry or success?	
<b>Job Specifics</b>	
What's a typical day like for you or someone in a similar position?	
What do you like most about your work?	
What do you like least?	
What talents or skills do you think are the most crucial to success in this work?	
What attitudes or values are important?	
Who seems to do well in this type of work?	
How do you advance or get promoted in this type of work?	
<b>Recommendations</b>	
Would my background be appropriate for this type of work?	
What would you recommend I do if I want to go into this type of work?	
Are there other jobs similar to yours that you would suggest I also consider?	
Can you recommend other people I can talk to, or other resources I can check out?	
Knowing what you do now, would you approach this career (or job) in the same way? If not, what would you do differently, and why?	

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## Rewards worksheet

## Rewards Worksheet

Use this worksheet to think through what really motivates you at work. You can also rate each item from low (1) priority or value to high (5). Review these ratings as you assess your degree of satisfaction with your current job, or as a guide to what you'd be looking for in your next position.

If you are a supervisor, you may use this as part of a development discussion with a direct report.

	Level of Importance or Value				
	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Financial gain</b> This position provides an excellent opportunity for financial reward.					
<b>Power and influence</b> The position offers the opportunity to exercise power and influence, and the chance to be an influential decision maker.					
<b>Lifestyle</b> The position fits with my desired lifestyle. It lets me balance work and life demands and interests.					
<b>Autonomy</b> The position offers me autonomy and independence—the ability to work without a lot of close supervision.					
<b>Affiliation</b> The position lets me work with colleagues I enjoy and admire, and gives me a sense of belonging to a group.					
<b>Workspace</b> The location and physical workspace are desirable and offer me benefits such as a pleasing environment, an easy commute, or accessibility to day care.					
<b>Intellectual stimulation or challenge</b> The position is interesting and challenging, and offers learning and development opportunities.					
<b>Competence</b> This position offers me the opportunity to build competence or expertise in an area.					
<b>Recognition and support</b> In this position and work environment, my contributions are recognized and valued. My development is supported as well.					
<b>Other</b> List additional specific rewards that you value.					
<b>Assessment</b> Reviewing your ratings above, what jumps out at you as most important? Least important? How well does your current job meet your reward needs?					
Are there some actions you can take to that your work better satisfies your needs, such as modifying your work, taking on a "stretch" assignment, or spending more time with colleagues you enjoy?					

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## Career self-assessment worksheet

<b>Career Self-Assessment Worksheet</b>	
<i>Use the following questions to help you think through your developmental needs and goals. Supplement this form with others such as the Rewards Worksheet to pull together a plan for your next developmental step.</i>	
<b>Current and Future Work Situation</b>	
What's the overall fit between your current position and your interests, values, and skills?	
What is your overall level of satisfaction with your current position? Are you beginning to sense it's time for a change?	
Do you anticipate that any of the following changes will occur in the foreseeable future? (Check all that apply.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in job
<input type="checkbox"/> Relocation: another part of country or international	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in workspace
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate downsizing or merger	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in employer
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in the type of work you do	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer to another division or part of the company	<input type="checkbox"/> Job redefined or enlarged
<input type="checkbox"/> Change to supervisory role	
What are the implications of any anticipated changes? Will you need to learn new skills? Will a change result in a more or less favorable position for you in terms of job fit and opportunity?	
<b>Skills: Strengths and Gaps</b>	
What are your top five skills (i.e., those where you have the most proficiency and/or those you enjoy using the most)?	
What are the top two or three skills you need to learn in order to grow in your job, advance to the next level, or seek a new job?	
What are your key transferable skills—those skills that are not just job-specific but that can be applied to work in many positions? Example: basic computer skills, negotiation skills, financial analysis.	
What do you think others would say are your strengths?	
<b>The Next Step and Opportunity</b>	
As a next step towards your long-term career goals, where do you see yourself six to twelve months from now?	
What are some developmental opportunities you can take advantage of?	
What parts of your work would you like to continue doing, or do with more skill?	
What new work activities or positions would you like to try?	
What are your short-term career-development goals?	
What support do you need to achieve them? (Training, people, time, money, etc.)	
What do you think others would say about your work and your career aspirations and plans?	

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## Why Develop Others?

“At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies.”

Larry Bossidy  
Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today's global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy  
Professor  
University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don't care what industry you're in, you need leaders who can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day

before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle where everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

“The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe

the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.

A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

**Dr. Noel M. Tichy**

**Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business**

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

## Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Interests assessment](#)

[Steps for sculpting your job](#)

[Career self-assessment worksheet](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

## Discussion 1: Discovering the work you love

When members of your team have job responsibilities that let them express their deepest passions — their core business interests — they deliver their best performance. They engage fully with their work. And they derive immense satisfaction from their job. Their morale, productivity, and loyalty all soar — benefiting them, the team, and your company overall.

But to do more of what they love, your employees first have to identify the work activities that most excite and stimulate them. This can be difficult. The good news is that there are several steps your team members can take to identify their core business interests — including reflecting on their work and life experiences, and getting feedback from colleagues who know them and have observed them at work.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to draw on their own experiences as well as feedback from colleagues to articulate their deepest passions at work.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Discovering the Work You Love](#)

[Discussion Guide: Discovering the Work You Love](#)

[Discussion Slides: Discovering the Work You Love \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Discussion 2: Supporting employees' career development

When your team leaders help their people do more of the work they love, they generate important advantages for the organization. For one thing, they encourage talented, ambitious people to stay with the company. They thus support the organization in its efforts to build a stronger workforce. They also help the organization save money: Hiring and training replacements is expensive.

To support their employees' efforts to manage their careers, your team leaders must help their people identify their core business interests. They must then give their employees job assignments that enable them to express their core business interests. Both of these activities may seem a bit daunting to some of your team leaders. Conducting a discussion focused on these processes can help them.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to help their own direct reports identify their core business interests and how to design work responsibilities to appeal to those interests.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Supporting Employees' Career Development](#)

[Discussion Guide: Supporting Employees' Career Development](#)

[Discussion Slides: Supporting Employees' Career Development \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)



Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback, and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Identify Your Business Interests, Work Values, and Transferable Skill](#)

[Learning Project: Conduct Informational Interviews](#)

## Reaching Your Potential

[Robert Steven Kaplan. "Reaching Your Potential." \*Harvard Business Review\*, July 2008.](#)

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Despite their lofty job titles and impressive pay, many high-achieving executives feel professionally dissatisfied and unfulfilled. Looking back, they wish they'd accomplished more or even chosen a different career altogether. Often they feel trapped in their jobs. In this article, Kaplan, a Harvard Business School professor, examines why people arrive at this impasse—and offers them guidance on how to break through it and reach their full potential.

## Managing Oneself

Peter F. Drucker. "Managing Oneself." *Harvard Business Review*, January, 2005.

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Throughout history, people had little need to manage their careers—they were born into their stations in life or, in the recent past, relied on their companies to chart their career paths. But times have drastically changed. Today we must all learn to manage ourselves. What does that mean? As Peter Drucker tells us in this seminal article, it means we have to learn to develop ourselves. We have to place ourselves where we can make the greatest contribution to our organizations and communities. And we have to stay mentally alert and engaged during a 50-year working life, which means knowing how and when to change the work we do.

## Surviving the Boss from Hell

David Silverman, Gini Graham, Brad Gilbreath, and Lauren Sontag. "Surviving the Boss from Hell." *Harvard Business Review*, September 2009.

[Download file](#)

### Summary

A project manager with a talent for creating dashboards, David is frustrated by his repressive, micromanaging boss, Thaddeus—aka "the Commodore." Thaddeus drones on about the high point of his own (now stalled) career, calls unnecessary last-minute meetings, and tries to one-up his direct reports—while bending over backward to honor an intern's filing job. David has managed to impress Irving, the EVP of Finance Europe, enough to receive a job offer, but it's a lateral move with no increase in pay. What should he do? Three experts comment on this fictional case study. He should stay where he is, at least for now, says Gini Graham Scott, an author, consultant, and motivational speaker. Meanwhile, he can form a supportive network of colleagues, make a special effort to find pleasures outside of work, and even attempt—non-confrontationally and subtly—to improve his relationship with the Commodore. Brad Gilbreath, formerly a human resources manager and now an assistant professor at Colorado State University, advises David to escape from Thaddeus in the interest of his own health. Research shows that bosses' behavior can lead to high blood pressure or psychiatric problems in their subordinates. By learning how to set boundaries, says Lauren Sontag, the president of a consulting firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, and talent management, David might be able to improve his relationship with Thaddeus. But accepting Irving's offer would provide more room to maneuver and advance. Alternatively, David might propose a dashboard "center of excellence" to serve both Thaddeus and Irving.